Department of Anthropology

Visual Anthropology Handout

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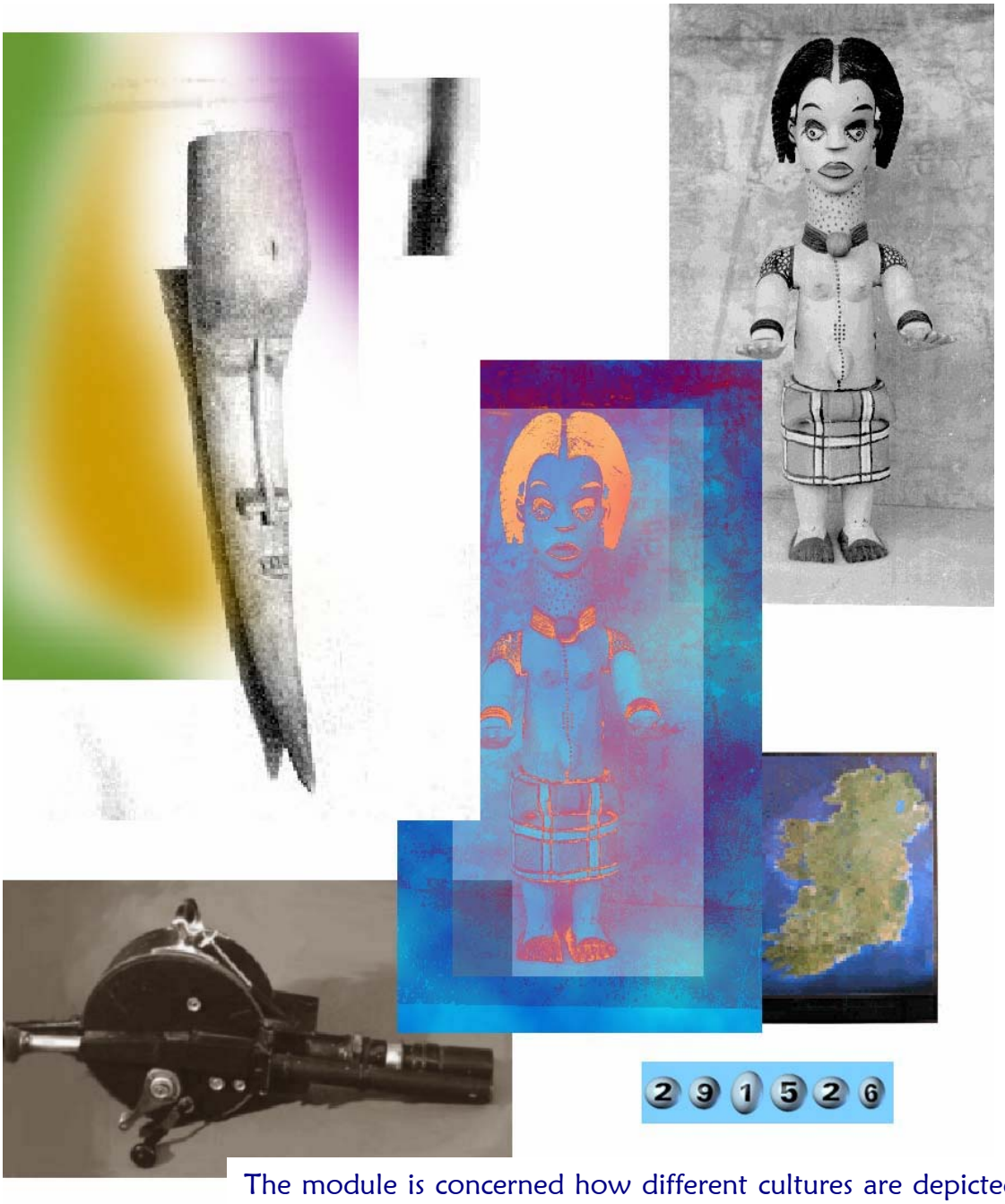
0 Module Description



The module is concerned how different cultures are depicted in a range of media, in particular ethnographic film and photography, and deals with the analytical and ethical issues raised by these representations. It considers how the analysis of art and material culture can be used by the anthropologists to gain insight into cultural forms and values. It also examines how different cultural groups represents themselves, to each other and to outsiders through art, material culture and performance.

Course code: 1ANTH0420
Lent Term 2004

Course Lecturer: Dr. Ma Àngels Trias i Valls
20 Credits

1 Object of the Course

In this course we will study the place of the 'visual' and visual systems from a cross-cultural point of view. We will examine how anthropology can contribute to –and gain insight from- the analysis of visual forms of representations. We will explore how images, forms or art, maps, pictures, ethnographic film, the body, gender, adornments to name a few, are constructed in societies across the globe. We will link visual systems to wider economic and social processes, and to the understanding of the different social categories and meanings of 'seeing'. We will also explore how different cultures are depicted in a range of media, in particular film and photography, and the ethical and analytical issues raised by these representations.

As well as looking at non-western societies, we will look at the West, and we will question the extent to which Western understandings to do with 'seeing', 'producing art', 'collecting images of other cultures', can be used as analytical tools in cross-cultural comparison. We will consider how the analysis of art and material culture can be used by the anthropologist to gain insight into cultural forms and values. Finally, we will look into how different cultural groups represent themselves, to each other and to outsiders through art, material culture and performance.

Photograph: Top right: tsunami block painting Edo Period (17thC) Japan. Bottom right: Canela elder with body adornments

2 Out of this course you should get…

- a considerable body of ethnographic knowledge, about visual systems, and the place of the visual in human cultures.
- a good understanding of the how and why of a range of ideas and practices to do with art, aesthetics, performance, material culture, photography and film
- a good grasp of the historical and conceptual development of visual anthropology within the discipline of anthropology
- the capacity to understand and use a range of visual anthropology tools, as well as to question issues of ethics and cultural representation.
- Increase the knowledge of ethnographic film and photography, and to assess its validity during and after fieldwork situations.

Some of the topics that we will cover are:

An overview of visual anthropology

The use of photography and film by anthropologists

The analysis of aesthetics across cultures

The Dreaming and native art

Maps and Landscapes

Wrapping and tattooing

Body modifications and presentation of the self

Ethnographic film

Ethics and issues of copyright, and the global discourse

Hypermedia and different types of visual ethnographies

Performance and Media

The Internet and its iconography

The New Visual Ethnographies

3 Bibliography

Key Texts:

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Ingold, T. (ed) (1994) **Companion encyclopaedia of anthropology** (section on the anthropology of art). London: Routledge.
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Hockings, P (1995) **Principles of visual anthropology** Mouton de Gruyter: Berlin ; New York .
Pink, S (2001) **Doing visual ethnography : images, media, and representation in research** Sage: London

Full Bibliography by themes.

Introduction And Theories

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Boas, F. (1966) *Kwakiutl Ethnography,* edited by Helen Codere. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.301.2971 BOA
Douglas, M. 1973. *Natural Symbols.* London: Random House. 291.37 DOU
Hodder, I. (1989) *The meaning of things: material culture and symbolic expression,* London: Unwin Hyman. 930.1 MBA
Horton, R. and Finnegan, R. (eds) (1973) *Modes of Thought: essays on thinking in Western and non-Western societies,* London: Faber and Faber. 153 HOR
Ingold, T. (ed) (1994) *Companion encyclopaedia of anthropology* (section on the anthropology of art). London: Routledge. R 301.203 COM
MacKenzie, M. 1991. *Androgynous Objects: String Bags and Gender in Central New Guinea.* Chur, Reading, Paris, Philadelphia, Tokyo,

Melbourne: Harwood Academic Publishers.301.2995 MAC
Tilley, C. (ed) 1990. *Reading Material Culture.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell. 306.REA

Photography

Gross, L., Stuart Katz, J., and Ruby, J. (eds) (1988) *Image Ethics: the moral rights of subjects in photographs, film and television,* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 175.1 IMA
Burgin, V. (ed) (1982) *Thinking Photography,* London: Macmillan. 770.1 THI
Devereaux, L. and Hillman, R. (eds) (1995) *Fields of Vision. Essays in film studies, visual anthropology and photography,* Berkeley: University of California Press. 301.161 FIE
Jeffrey, I. (1981) *Photography: a concise history,* Oxford: Oxford University Press [not in the library at Lampeter].
Sontag, S. (1977) *On Photography,* New York: Penguin. 770 SON
Wells, L. (ed.) (1997) *Photography: a critical introduction,* New York: Routledge. 770 PHO

Maps and Landscapes: Rock Art in Australia

Hirsch, E and O'Hanlon, M (eds.) *The Anthropology of Landscape: perspectives on place and space,* Oxford: Clarendon Press. 301.21 ANT
Morphy, H. (1991) *Ancestral Connections: Art and an Aboriginal System of Knowledge,* Chicago: Chicago University Press. 301.2994 MOR
Munn, N. (1973) *Walbiri Iconography, Graphic Representation and Cultural*
Symbolism in a Central Australian Society, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press. 301.2994 MUN
Strang, V. (1997) *Uncommon Ground: Cultural Landscapes and Environmental Values,* Oxford, New York: Berg.
Bender, B. (ed) (199 *3) Landscape, politics and perspectives,* Oxford: Berg. 930.1 BEN
Cosgrove. D. and Daniels, S. (1988) *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments,* Cambridge:Cambridge University Press. 712 ICO
Gell, A. (1985) 'How to read a map: remarks on the practical knowledge of navigation' in *Man* 20 2:271-286
Jelinek, J. (1989) The great art of the early Australians : The study of the evolution and role of rock art in the society of Australian hunters and gatherers, Brno: Moravian Museum, Anthropos Institute. Q 759.01130994 JEL

Art, Tattooing and Wrapping

Coote, I. and Shelton, A. (eds.) (1992) (eds.) *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics,* Oxford: Cilarendon Press. 700.103 ANT
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--Wrapping in images: tattooing in Polynesia (1993) Clarendon Press. 301.2996 GEL
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Hatcher, E. (1985) *Art as Culture: an introduction to the anthropology of art,* Lanham [Md.]: University Press of America. 700.103 HAT
Layton, R. (1991) *The anthropology of art,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.709.01 LAY
Marcus, G. and Myers, F. (eds) (1995) *The Traffic in Culture: refiguring art and anthropology,* Berkeley, University of California Press. 700.103 TRA
Morphy, H. (ed) (1989) *Animals into art,* London: Unwin Hyman. 704.9432 ANI

Ethnographic Film and the Media

Banks, M. (1988). 'The Non-Transparency of Ethnographic Film' in *Anthropology Today,* Vol 4. No. *5.* October 1988.
Belsey, A. and Chadwick, R. (eds) (1992) *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media,* London, New York: Routledge. 301.161 ETH
MacDougall, D. (1978) 'Ethnographic Film: failure or promise' in *Annual Review of Anthropology,* Vol 7. 1978 pp 405-426
Turner, T. (1992) 'Defiant images: the Kayapo appropriation of video' in *Anthropology Today* 8 *(6), 5-16.*
Belsey, A. and Chadwick, R. (eds) (1992) *Ethical Issues in Journalism and the Media,* London, New York: Routledge 301.161 ETH
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Ziff, B. and Pratima, V. (eds) (1997) *Borrowed Power: essays on cultural appropriation* New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press. 301.2 BOR

Ethnographic film II

Crawford P. and Turton, D. (eds) *Film as Ethnography.* Manchester: Manchester University Press with Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology. 301.161 FW
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Loizos, P.(1993) *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: from innocence to self-consciousness, 1955-1985,* Manchester: Manchester University Press
Morphy, H. (1994) 'The interpretation of ritual: reflections from film on anthropological practice' in *Man,* (NS) 29.1:117-46

Performance

Harrison, S. (1995) transformations of Identity in Sepik Warfare', pp.81-[97] in M. Strathern (ed) *Shifting Contexts,* London, New York: Routledge.

Kratz, C. (1994) *Affecting Performance: meaning movement and experience in Okiek women's initiation,* Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press. 301.412096762 KRA
Schechner, R. and Appel, W. (1990) *By Means of Performance: intercultural studies of theatre and ritual.* Cambridge University Press. 301.57 BY
Turner, V. (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre: the human seriousness of play,* New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications. 301.57 TUR
Parker, A. and Kosofsky Sedgwick, E. (eds) *(1995)* Performativity and performance New York: Routledge. 804 PER
Parkin. D., Caplan, L. and Fisher, H. (1996) *The Politics of Cultural Performance,* Providence, Oxford: Berghahn Books. 301.2 POL
Shore, B. (1996) *Culture in Mind: cognition, culture and the problem of meaning,* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Visual Culture, Methodology And Ethnographies. New Titles:

*Visual culture***:** the reader *edited by Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall.* London; Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications in association with the Open University, 1999 701 VIS
The seen and the unseeable: visual culture in the Middle East, Walter Amburst [Amsterdam]: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998 301.1610917671 VIS
Religion, art, and visual culture: a cross-cultural readeR, edited Brent Plate 704.948 REL
Sights of resistance: approaches to Canadian visual culture, Robert J. Belton. *759.11 BEL*
Diaspora and visual culture: representing Africans and Jews, edited by Nicholas Mirzoeff. *Call Number: 701.03 DIA*
Republics of ideas: republicanism culture visual arts, edited by Brad Buckley and John Conomos. *Call Number: 994 REP*
Visual culture of Wales. Imaging the nation, Peter Lord. *Q 709.429 LOR*
Picturing culture: explorations of film & anthropology, Jay Ruby. *301.161 RUB This book is very important!*
Visual anthropology in India and its developmenT, KSahay *301.1610954 SAH*
Secret museum of mankind. *301.2 SEC*
Researching the visual: images, objects, contexts and interactions in social and cultural inquiry, Michael Emmison and Philip Smith *300.72 EMM*
Doing visual ethnography: images, media, and representation in research Sarah Pink. *300.72 This book is Essential for the course*
Visual methodologies: an introduction to the interpretation of visual materials, Gillian Rose. *701 ROS*
Visual methods in social research, Marcus Banks. *300.72 BAN*
Ethnographer's eye: ways of seeing in anthropology, Anna Grimshaw *301.161 GRI*
Fields of vision: essays in film studies, visual anthropology, and photography, edited by Leslie Devereaux and Roger Hillman. *Call Number: 301.161 FIE*
Principles of visual anthropology, edited by Paul Hockings. *301.161 PRI*
Film as ethnography, edited by Peter Ian Crawford and David Turton. 301.161 FIL
Visual anthropology: photography as a research method, John Collier, Jr.,

and Malcolm Collier. *300.72 COL*
Doing visual ethnography: images, media, and representation in research, Sarah Pink. *300.72 This book is Essential for the course*
Unthinking Eurocentrism: multiculturalism and the media, *Ella Shohat 301.161 SHO*

Basic filmography for this course

Photo Wallahs D. McDougall (1992) Classic ethnographic film that touches on the relation between photography, naturalistic appropriation of images, art through images, presentation of the self through taking photograph in India

Ways of Seeing 1: Reproductions by John Berger (1985) Classic BBC program that covers Berger's own work on European art from an anthropological point of view. A great visual support to his written work of the same title

Ways of Seeing 2: Possessions by John Berger (1985) Part II of the Classic BBC episodes on Berger's work on oil painting in Europe

Exploring Photography 3: Landscapes by the BBC (1985) This program looks at framing, size, and the use of black and white photography. This film is a good contrast to Photo Wallahs and a good complement to the class exercise on photography

Out of Africa (1997) L Barash and L Taylor Excellent ethnographic film that looks into the relation between the production of art or 'wood', conceptions of native art, appropriation of art by foreign importers, ways of resistance through art and the importance of art in defining religious and social identity

Dreamings by Film Australia (1988) gives a general overview of Aboriginal art and the way in which it signifies Aboriginal cosmology and the intimacy of their relations with land. It shows works from the Central Desert (acrylic dot paintings) and some ochre bark paintings and burial poles from Arnhem Land

Nanook the Eskimo by Flaherty, J (1922) The classic ethno/documentary on Eskimo life at the early turn of the 20th Century which marked the birth of ethnographic and documentary film-making

Tracking the Pale Fox. (1983) Luc the Heusch film traces Marcel Griaule's classical work with the Dogon, looking at the ritual and aesthetic principles of the Dogon's cosmology

The Ax Fight by Napoleon Chagnon (1971) Asch, T. (Dir.) and Chagnon, N. Film (1971) Once the classical film of american anthropology, it looks at the 'discovery' of the Yanomamo and it considers their cosmology, patterns of behaviour and Chagnon's fieldwork experience

Guardians of the Forest by Folly-Reimann, A (1991) Ethnographic film looking at Fetish priests in West Africa and their iterpretations of the 'Forces' and ritual performance, healing and gender

Strangers Abroad: Fieldwork (1989) by the BBC This episode of Strangers Abroad introduces fieldwork through Spencer and Gill's study of the Aranda (Pal Spring Australia) and Aranda's paintings and dreaming

You also have a large collection of more recently filmed ethnographic films in the offprint library. These are for you to view on a 24hour loan.

4 Internet References

Key Internet sites:

http://www.qub.ac.uk/sa/resources/VendaGirls/index.html
http://www.usc.edu/dept/elab/urlist/ur05.htm
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/cultanthro.html
http://www.criticaldesign.com/anthropo/visanth/visanth.htm
http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/index.html
http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/visualising_ethnography/
http://www.dreamtime.net.au/
http://www.pacificislandtravel.com/fr_polynesia/about_destin/tatoo.html
http://rai.anthropology.org.uk/
http://members.aol.com/nonverbal2/diction1.htm
http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/emuseum1.html

Society for Visual Anthropology –EASA logo

Recommended readings from Jay Ruby:

http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/is.html
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/boas.html
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/flaherty.html
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/speaking.html
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/cultanthro.html

Have a look at the Web Archive

http://nimbus.ocis.temple.edu/~jruby/wava/

Read some of these articles from SIGHTS

http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/

Gender and photography

http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/carol.htm

McDougall's

http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/david2.htm

Ethnography/Photography

http://cc.joensuu.fi/sights/jari.htm

Recommended links

http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/VAR/fr-links.html

Visual Research Methods:

http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU11/SRU11.html

Stirling Lecture

http://www.ukc.ac.uk/anthropology/stirling/henley2.html

5 Intranet Links

Frese, P 1992 Artifacts of Gendered Space: American Yard Decoration. Visual Anthropology Vol 5 17-42 [vis1]

Collier, J 1987 Visual Anthropology's Contribution to the Field of Anthropology. Visual Anthropology, Vol.1, pp.37-46 [vis2]

Harper, D 1987 The Visual Ethnographic Narrative. Visual Anthropology, Vol1, pp1-19 [vis3]

McDougall, D 1992 Photo Hierarchicus: Signs and Mirrors in Indian Photography. Visual Anthropology, Vol.5, pp. 103-129 [vis4]

Kulick, D and Wilson, M 1992 Echoing Images: The Construction of Savagery Among Papua New Guinean Villagers. Visual Anthropology, Vol. 5, pp, 143-152 [vis5]

Postcard celebrating 1st may - Krakow

6 Course Itinerary

Lectures

1 - Introduction: the study of visual systems

2 -'Seeing Culture' and Material Culture

3 - What is Art? Aesthetics and cultural translation

4 - Methods in visual anthropology: film, photography, text

5 – Photography

6 - Film I

7 - Film II

8 – Indigenous Art and the Global discourse

9 – Hypermedia: Iconography and the Internet

10 - Maps, Murals, Landscape and Identity

11 –Tattooing and Body Modification

12 – Performance and Ritual - Revision class

Tutorials

1-Japanese colours – group game

2-The Bilum in Papua New Guinea/Photographs– group exercise

3-Wakakusa and the Go game – individual exercise

4-Out of Africa – ethnographic film

5-Photo Wallahs- ethnographic film

6-Nanook of the North - ethnographic film

7-The Guardian of the Forest – ethnographic film -optionaL

8-Dreamings and B. Auntie Tale in Australia –film/internet

7 Assessment

2 Essays of 2,500 words (50%)
1 Unseen examination in May/June (50%)
Tutorial participation will contribute towards your marks
Exam questions will be based on lectures, ethnographic films and the key readings for this course

Essay 1 (25%) – essay titles:

1- How would you do a visual ethnography?

2- Discuss the methods for collection of visual systems when doing fieldwork. Use two ethnographic cases to illustrate these methods

3- A book review from one of the works on the reading list for this module. You should select a book that you have not read before

4- Analyse the following sites:
http://www.si.edu/naa/canela/canela1.htm

http://www.qub.ac.uk/pas/sa/resources/Samba/index.html

and answer: how do these sites help us in producing anthropological knowledge?

5- Discuss Jay Ruby's argument:

> *'the tendency on the part of some anthropologists to equate virtually any film about people with ethnography is a serious impediment to the development of a social scientific means of visual communication and must be dealt with'*

in his famous article: "is an ethnographic film a filmic ethnography?"

Look into his in his work and his hypermedia text http://www.temple.edu/anthro/ruby/is.html to answer this question. Do not restrict your answer to one author only, you should attempt to complement your discussion with what other authors say about the theme of ethnographic film making.

Essay 2 (25%) - essay titles:

1- Why is visual anthropology central to the discipline of Anthropology? Use examples from the bibliography

2- Review one ethnographic film from the departmental video [numbers54 to 59 only]

3- What are the main ethical problems when using film or photography during fieldwork?

4- Why is Nanook of the North important for the birth of ethnographic film?

5- Make a photographic essay of any cultural/religious/political event where you live. The diary must have 2,500 words and have the structure of an essay, with an introduction, argument and conclusion, but the pictures must be integrated in the essay. Photographs should not be used to 'illustrate' only. Use photographs to question the ways we use photographs to represent other people's lives. Use bibliography from the course to substantiate any claims you make

Film reviews should be 2,500 words long. A review should include a brief description of the film's argument, and consider critically the ethnographic value of the play. You also need to give reference of the author, length, year, editor and anthropologists working on the film. It should have the structure of an essay. Use bibliography, from the course, to question the role of film in representing other people's lives.

Fabric pattern - India

8 Lecture 1 Introduction to visual anthropology

Summary of the Lecture

Today's Issue: What is anthropology? What is visual anthropology? What is the place of visual anthropology within the discipline of Anthropology? What is a visual system?

What is Anthropology?
Anthropology is a representational process, engaged in an activity of cultural translation and interpretation. This translation, in essence, is a political exercise. Anthropologists aim to engage with people's lives while keeping a sense of critical representation of society and culture.

What is Visual Anthropology?
Visual Anthropology is the study of the properties of visual systems; of how things are seen and how what is seen is understood (Murphy and Banks 1997:21).

Visual Anthropology is a sub-discipline within anthropology. It involves the study of visual systems and material culture. For many people, visual anthropology is a specialized study of culture involving film and video. Visual anthropology also includes "*the production and analysis of still photos, the study of art and material culture, and the investigation of gestures, facial expressions and spatial aspects of behavior and interaction*" (Jacknins 1994:33)

These above definitions look at visual anthropology from the point of view of its methods [film and photography] and its scope [the analyses material culture, gestures and so on]. However, visual anthropology is more than just a method for collecting and analysing visual data. As Morphy and Banks argue: "*visual anthropology is concerned with the whole process of anthropology, from the recording of data, through its analysis to the dissemination of the results of research. Visual Anthropology is central to anthropology because it's reflexive nature. In other words, it helps us appreciate the positioning of all actors (anthropologists, informants, and media people*[1]" (ibid.)

Visual anthropology focus on:
- the use of visual material in anthropological research
- the study of visual systems and visible culture
- the production and consumption of visual texts
- the properties of the anthropologist's own representational systems
- the properties of the visual systems studied by the anthropologist on the field

Visual anthropology has three agendas:
- one agenda of visual anthropology is to analyse the properties of visual systems; to
- determine the properties of visual systems; and how these relate to particular political and interpretative processes.
- A second agenda is to analyse the visual means of disseminating anthropological knowledge itself.

The objectives of visual anthropology are:
- to reveal the different 'ways of seeing' within and between societies, and to show how they influence action in the world and people's conceptualization of the world
- to "monitor" the journeys of visual systems as to provide a perspective on the changes of meaning, the mistranslation, intentional distortions, and to relate them to the sociocultural processes of which they are a part.

[1] Italics/emphasis mine

- to make people aware of things they are unaware, possible misrepresentations and prejudices about the meaning of their own/and other visual systems
- to interrogate the world, and to interrogate itself, our own visual representations, to question anthropology about its own rigid boundaries
- to bring indigenous media within the space of anthropology
- to transcend the political nature of representation in anthropology as to rethink our strategies for engaging with the world

What is a visual system?
Most human actions have a visual dimension. These constitute visual systems. Visual systems are part of more general cultural process, they are not just 'out there': they influence the construction of the world. As Banks and Morphy argue: " a visual system is the process that result in humans producing visible objects, reflexively constructing their visual environment and communicating by visual means; *visual worlds reflect different ways of seeing*" (1997:21)

The study of visual systems means to study how images move from one context to another and between societies, their incorporation into new ways of seeing, new views of the world, their change across time and space, their change from medium to medium, their association with particular conceptualisation. (ibid.)

What do we mean by 'ways of seeing'?
Our vision is culturally and socially constructed. Ways of seeing refers to the how the world is seen by people and how people learn to use visual systems. A classical example of a way of seeing is what we call 'art' in western society. Many people see the world by using a combination of systems, such as perspective, illusion or distortion.

To Sum Up
Visual anthropology collects two kinds of data: visual recordings and material culture. This may might include: rituals, performances, photography, painting, sculpture, film, sign and body language, aesthetics, maps, body modifications, wrapping, murals, written language, objects and artifacts, architecture, landscape.

Visual Anthropology raises important issues about accuracy, objectivity, ethical issues, and how we portray other cultures, how we produce ethnographic texts, how we interpret other cultures. In lecture two we will consider how we deal with material culture, and in lecture three we will consider the methods for dealing with the collection and interpretation.

Today's quotation

> *"Images are 'everywhere'. They permeate our academic work, everyday lives, conversations and dreams (…). They are inextricably interwoven with our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies, as well as with definitions of history, space and truth. Ethnographic research is likewise intertwined with visual images and metaphors. When ethnographers produce photographs or video, these visual texts, as well as the experience of producing and discussing them, become part of their ethnographic knowledge"*
> *(Pink 2001:17)*

References and Further reading:

Banks, M and Morphy, H 1997 *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*. Yale University Press
Berger, J 1972 *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin 700BER
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Jacknis, I 1994 '*Society for Visual Anthropology'*, Anthropology Newsletter 35 (4):33-4
Pink, S 2001 *Doing Visual Ethnography*. Sage Publications:London
Article on *Margaret Mead and Visual Anthropology*
http://www.temple.edu/anthro/worth/seight.html

9 Lecture 2 "Seeing Culture" and dealing with Material Culture

Summary of the Lecture

Today's Issue: How do we deal with material culture? What is the relation between visual systems and material culture? How can we best analyse material culture? Brief overview of the theories behind the analysis of material culture.

Basic assumptions:

- Visual anthropology gathers data from visual recordings and the material products of culture
- Visual systems are socially and culturally constructed
- Photography and film are used to record visual systems, while material culture, although it can be photographed and film, it is also physically collected; both require different types of collection and we ought to say, different types of interpretation
- Material objects are visual, but visual images are not, by definition material (Pink 2001:23) but not less real.

Analysing Material Culture:

Objects must be situated within their ethnographic context. Without ethnographic context, [see case of museums] any object is divorced from its meaning. It becomes a fetished object (see Miller 1985)

The meaning of an object rests within the relationship that the object and their context create. All objects have symbolic meaning [values, beliefs, practices]

Fetishisation of objects:

When material culture is removed from its context of production, it is often recreated anew as a Western Art object, the meaning and values bears little relation to its indigenous context, except it is used to create the sense of authenticity. The object becomes associated with an aesthetic, way of seeing, that belongs to a different cultural tradition. The objects appear fetishistic. The concern for the object in itself and the total ignorance of the context of the human relations that produced the object renders the object a mere fetish.

Different theoretical frameworks for analyzing Material Culture:

Cognitive views
- Functionalist
- Museum collections/inventories
- Communication modes/semiotics

These center on the meaning of objects, and on the cognitive and intellectual production of objects. They consider the relationship of material culture to other aspects of society [institutions, technology..] They fail to account for a behavior-centered analysis through which objects [and its meanings] are constructed

Processual views
- Studies on technology and material culture [new definitions of technology]
- The objects, practices, and beliefs of a cultural group are connected as a system, and any study needs to make reference to this context and in terms of these connections

- We need a framework from where to see how an object becomes constructed as a social form endowed with culturally specific meanings, and to allow for an interpretation of that cultural form which would include indigenous understandings not only anthropological understandings.

    - **MacKenzie's premises**: "*material culture should be examined in relation to the particular structures and processes through which they are created, rooted in productive relations and social networks that structure a given social organization. Emphasizing the connections between the object and the way it is integrated into the lives of those that make it and use it*".

    - We need to examine how a cultural object is constructed as a complex social product, and to examine the object as if it had a social life which is integrated within other social relation

    - How to deal with the problem of fetishisation of objects? :
      We need a framework of analysis that would enable us to examine:
    - the way in which material objects are constructed as a social products; to consider the social conditions of manufacture, production, the reception of such products; its use, roles, ideas; the activities of the producer and the consumer; the material forms, multifunction, and ideas around the object in each stage of its life cycle.

Today's quotation:

> *"An inspection of material culture may contribute insights into character structure and reveal emotional qualities(…) It entails examining utilitarian constructions, like houses and toboggans, to determine the values they embody (…) The proportion of non-utilitarian objects to utilitarian objects in a culture may also be meaningful. Type and number of possessions may reveal drives and aspirations in a class structured community" (Honningham in Collier 1999:46)*

References and Suggested readings:

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Collier, J 1999 *Visual Anthropology.* University of New Mexico Press: Alburquerque
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10 Lecture 3 What is Art? Aesthetics and cultural translation

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue: What is art? Is art a western concept? If so, can we understand the meaning of art from other cultures? Is Aesthetics a cross-cultural concept?

What is Art?
There are many definitions of Art. Unlike museum curators and art critics, anthropologist consider the emic –internal- view of art in different societies.

Anthropology with its holistic and phenomenological view of culture, broadens concepts of what was art to include things like body painting, scarification, mural paintings, sand drawings and other oral or visual media.

Morphy argues that art contains systems of representing and encoding which in turn, reflect cultural knowledge. The meaning of art can be understood by applying a series of ethnographically-based questions.

These questions do not just ask about 'art', as a separate, objectifiable thing. They concentrate on how art is produced and the meaning that is encoded in objects and society as a whole. Art can only be understood from within; it can not be extracted from a 'free-standing' object.

Can we translate art across-cultures? the problem with aesthetics
Layton (1991) suggests that there are two major ways of defining art which are cross cultural: aesthetics and communication [art as communication distinguished by a particular apt set of images].

In order to be able define art across-cultures anthropologists needed to re-define aesthetics (consider Morphy's quotation below). Aesthetics can be understood at two levels: universal and contextual. The physical effect of the quality of things exists independent of cultural evaluations of it. As soon as things are perceived, interpreted and evaluated, this evaluation varies according to context and culture.

How do we analyse aesthetics and art?
Interpreting art involves several key steps:

- Identifying its images or components
- Locating them in time and space
- Discovering how meaning is encoded
- Identifying the relationships between images
- Interpreting the object as part of a wider cultural system

All of these require ethnographic knowledge about that society, its categories and values

An anthropology of aesthetics
The anthropology of aesthetic would be concerned with how objects work, how they achieve what it is they are meant to achieve in their cultural context. This has nothing

to do with universal qualities or standards of beauty, but with people's conceptualizations of the effects of their art works.

Examples in class: Wakakusa and the Go game/Art in the Sepik

Today's quotation

> *"'Art is dead…because reality itself, entirely impregnated by an aesthetic which is inseparable from its own structure, has been confused with its own image. Baudrillart 1990: 151"*

References and Suggested Readings

Baudrillard 1999 *Seduction* Basingstoke, Macmillan
Coote and Shelton (1992) *Anthropology art and aesthetics,* Oxford: Clarendon Press. 700. 103 ANT
Gell, A. (1992) 'The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology' in J. Coote and A. Shelton (eds.) *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics,* Oxford:Clarendon Press. 700. 103 ANT
Hatcher, E. (1985) *Art as Culture: an introduction to the anthropology of art,* Lanham [Md.]: University Press of America. 700.103 HAT
Dransart, P. (ed) (1995) *Andean art: visual expression and its relation to Andean beliefs and values,* Aldershot: Avebury, (Worldwide archaeology series; 13) 709.801AND
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Miller, D. (1985) *Artefacts as categories: a study of ceramic variability in Central India,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 738.30934 ML
Marcus, G. and Myers, F. (eds) (1995) *The Traffic in Culture: refiguring art and anthropology,* Berkeley, University of California Press. 700.103 TRA
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Exercise: Art from the Sepik

"The Sepik region of Papua New Guinea has for the past one hundred years or so been recognised as one of the great art producing areas of the world. Along the banks and lagoons of the Sepik river the many major tributary rivers flowing into the Sepik and in the surrounding mountains and hill country art in a wide range of forms and styles is traditionally produced.

The Sepik River rises in the central mountain ranges of Papua New Guinea. After leaving the mountains it flows eastwards through a wide floodplain of riverine swamps and marshes to the Pacific Ocean. The valley is subject to annual flooding, sometimes to such an extent as to create a lake in the middle Sepik Valley, making the valley a one hundred and fifty mile long and thirty mile wide inlet of the sea. To protect against flooding, village buildings along the rivers are raised on stilts. This annual cycle of flooding brings with it economic benefits such as varieties of fish and the enormous benefits such as varieties of fish and the enormous tree-trunks used for building and for the making of canoes and slit drums. The riverine environment is reflected in the mythology and art, for example, the Iatmul, who live along the Sepik river, have a creation myth attributing the origin of the earth, man and the Sepik river, to the primordial crocodile spirit.

Art in the forms of architecture, sculpture, painting, basketry, pottery, clay modelling and body decoration is found in profuse quantities in the numerous cultures of the Sepik region and is an expression of man's relationship with the supernatural.

The architecture of the Haus Tambaran (spirit houses) in the region is highly elaborated. In each Sepik culture spirit houses are exaggerated forms of domestic house structures. Along the river spirit houses with saddle-shaped rooves, and forward-sloping triangular gable ends are raised on stilts. These supports are carved with human figures representing clan spirits. The gable ends are decorated with clan and ancestral spirits on painted sago-spathe sheets or as carved wooden or woven rattan masks. Amongst the mountain peoples to the north of the river, (the Arapesh, Abelam and Boiken), the spirit

A Spirit House in the Abelam Village of Neligum. The painted representations of the ancestors on the façade dominate the village. This spirit house, photographed in 1974, was approximately 25 meters high

houses have large forward-sloping facades decorated with representations of ancestral figures. Spirit house architecture in New Guinea is at its most spectacular amongst the Abelam.

In the Sepik human share the natural world with the spirits. Physical features of the environment were not only created by mythological creatures they may also be the dwelling-places of supernatural spirits, to be avoided or treated with reverence. Birds, insects and animal life may be the shades of spirits, or messengers of spirits. Representations of these are found in art from across the Sepik, the crocodile is a common motif on Iatmul art, the hornbill, and (a bird of paramount importance in the yam cult of the Abelam), is common in a number of Sepik cultures. Such motifs are found in combination with the most prominent feature of Sepik art, the human form.
The full human body or the head, in realistic, stylised or abstract form, is found in the art of all Sepik cultures. Sculptured wooden figures of the human form can range in size from a few centimetres to in excess of five metres. Masks in wood or woven rattan are found in multiple contexts; they appear on the gable ends of spirit houses, as the face for masked figures in fibre costumes, on war-canoe prows and in other situations. They are found in a wide range of styles and sizes, even within one

cultural group masks exhibit great stylistic variation (for which the Sepik region is notable). Art from along the Sepik river is distinguished by the prominent use of incised or painted curvilinear designs. Figures or heads with elongated noses joining the chin or body give rise of a so-called 'Beak' style whilst others with sets of 'opposed' hooks are common to the hill country south of the river, to the north of the river, sculpture relies on pyolchrome painting rather than incised work to create motifs. None of these sytles are, however, mutuallly exclusive and much remains to be done in defining the sub-styles of Sepik Art.

Masks in combination with shell jewellery, feathers and plumes are used to decorate these yams from the southern Abelam.

Body decoration throughout the Sepik shows a similar degree of variation and stylistic diversity as other art forms. The most dramatic form of body decoration is the scarification cut on the skin of Iatmul novices, at initiation, in patterns of crocodile markings. Throughout the region participants in ritual adorn themselves with decoration comprising headdressses, feathers, shell ornaments, colorful vegetation, carved bone and body paints. Such decoration is highly structured according to ritual status.

Across the Sepik everyday objects such as pottery hearths and containers, canoes, canoe paddles, sago pegs, digging sticks, lime spatulas and stringbags are decorated with art work. Art objects are always seen in association with other art objects, accompanied with music, singing or the hubbub of ritual or daily life.

Carved wooden basket hooks are one of the most distinctive art forms from the Sepik area. Photograph taken in the Iatmul village of Korogo in 1973

All cultures across the Sepik have undergone considerable change in the past half century. One of the changes has been the exposure of Sepik cultures to the tourist and artefact industries. As the traditional uses for art decline as a consequence of westernisation of beliefs and attitudes the sytles and motifs of traditional art find continued expression in tourist art"

Noel McGuigan QUB 1995

Exercise:
Analyse this text and criticise the way Sepik cultures are 'seen' and represented in this text. How is 'art' defined? What does this text say about art? What is missing in the text?
Read any of the ethnographic cases from Coote, J (ed.) 1992 *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics* **and to compare it to this one. I would like you to examine how different analysis of art [and different visual narratives] produce different understandings of culture, as well as different types of anthropological knowledge**

11 Lecture 4 Methods in Visual Anthropology: film, photography and text

Summary of the Lecture

Today's lecture: What is the relationship between visual anthropology, film and photography? A brief history of the use of film and photography in anthropology.

Anthropology and films:
Anthropology has had an uncomfortable relationship with film and photography.
Problems: requires specialised knowledge and it may lead to film production for its own sake. For many anthropologists is not 'serious anthropology'. This is only produced in texts. Photography is used as an 'illustration'. This is a narrow-minded view of film and photography. Film and photography can help anthropologist in making inquiries into social world.

Photographs and films do not capture 'what's out there'. The images they produce have to be analysed and interpreted

One of the objects of visual anthropology (in relation to film and photography) should be to bring cinema into closer relation to the written work, for anthropology and other disciplines.

Visual supports as method:
Film, photography and other visual supports are a method. It is a medium to capture essential aspects of anthropological research, using the camera as a laboratory of capturing information, like a lab, where information can later be 'seen' again, and analysed. However, visual supports, [e.g. film] are not just a tool for 'storing' images. Film and photography are both a method for [capturing images] and a framework for analysis.

19th Century Film and Photography aided anthropology in providing images of the 'other' to western audiences, proving wrong the evolutionary paradigms of the time

20th Century has seen a period of crises and evolution, where film and photography is not longer a privilege of the few, and where we find a multitude of 'voices' or rather 'ways of framing'. Along with the erosion of the discourse about "the west – the other", film and photography have reflected the different paradigm shifts.

Contemporary uses of ethnographic film and ethnographic photography create surprising images, it estimulates reflexive practice, it challenges the paradigm of realism, and it questions the very authority of visual imagery as evidence (Banks 1997)

Visual Research methods should be 'informed by ethnographer's knowledge of the visual cultures in which they work, including knowledge about local and academic uses of photograph (Pink 2001:50)

The issue of the Audience:
There is a cinematographic audience receptive to images, and images themselves are a social medium of exchange of ideas. [people exchange/show images that matter to them –e.g. wallets] If it matters to people it matters to anthropologists. Anthropology has its 'own' audience: other anthropologists and 'close-by' disciplines. Film can be used to help anthropologist/other social scientist think about how in anthropology we 'represent', 'reflect', 'capture', 'store' society and culture.

There are two representational practices we must keep in mind. These have an impact on how ethnographic films are consumed by an audience:
-Those we could level "science" such as the documentary, children's and nature programs.

-Hollywood – which creates most cinematic conventions and production values. These conventions affect how things are represented, and how the nature of relationships, conventions [beauty] is explored.

The ethnographic audience may find itself puzzled towards visual discourses that are neither specifically "scientific" or specifically narrated in "Hollywood" terms.

Film, photography and the idea of 'technology':
New technologies, cheaper, lightweight, digital cameras have changed the way anthropologist used to collect information. It has also reduced the 'technological' complexity, more people can use video and photographic equipment. It has produced very good examples for anthropologists to think about what are 'technology' and its uses. Simultaneously, anthropologists do fieldwork among people who have access to cameras, and in many cases, people's experience with film is incorporated into ethnographic films, texts and photographic displays. Despite this, film is perceived as glamorous, and although it provides anthropologists the opportunity to extend their work into cinema and television, it also creates problems in terms of who has the rights of the production and editorial control of images.

Consequences of technological change:
Technology (visual technology) has changed the possibilities for seeing the world. Now we have familiar images that were previously invisible objects. Can you find an example?
- ……..

Today's quotations:

> *"The problematic power of photography and film, in their apparently authentic representation of what actually happened, in their capacity to be highly constructed in inapparent ways, in their dependence upon context for interpretation, is deeply present in the material culture of our present era, lavishly exploited and celebrated in the pop rock video clip as well as in presences and more significant absences of images in television news. ..This interplay of the profoundly real with forms of representations, which also have consequences, implications, and reality" (Deveraux 1995)…is a concern of visual anthropologists*

> *Usually an anthropologist takes a photograph to illustrate a finding that he has already decided is significant. He waits until whatever it is happens, then points his camera at it. He uses the camera as a highly selective confirmation that certain things are so, or as very selective sample of "reality"…John Collier shows us how the camera can be used inductively, as all research techniques should be used in fieldwork. The fieldworker can take a picture of something that he does not fully, or sometimes partially understand, something that he can record for later understanding. Spindler 1967.*

References and further reading:

Devereaux, L. and Hillman, R. (eds) (1995) *Fields of Vision. essays in film studies, visual anthropology and photography,* Berkeley: University of California Press. 301.161 FIE
Ziff, B. and Pratima, V. (eds) (1997) *Borrowed Power: essays on cultural appropriation* New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press. 301.2 BOR
Ruby 2001 Picturing culture: explorations of film and anthropology *301.161 RUB*
Michael E and Philip Smith 1999 Researching the visual: images, objects, contexts and interactions in social and cultural inquiry *300.72 EMM*
Larson, H 1988 Photography that Listens. Visual Anthropology Vol 1, pp415-432.
Pink, S 2001 Doing visual ethnography: images, media, and representation in research Sage publications: London *300.72*
Rose, G 1998 Visual methodologies: an intro. to the interpretation of visual materials *701 ROS*
Marcus Bank 1997 Visual methods in social research. Social Research Update *300.72 BAN*
Deveraux, L, Hillman, R 1995 Fields of vision : essays in film studies, visual anthropology, and photography. University of California Press: California *301.161 FIE*
Hockings, P (ed) 1995 Principles of visual anthropology. Second Edition. The Hague:MOunton *301.161 PRI*

Next week: bring a photograph that has some meaning for you. How could you explain your picture visually? Bring the photograph and ideas to the class.

12 Lecture 5 Photography

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

The power of photography. Photography and fieldwork. Ethnographic photographs. Photography and capturing social reality.

A varied history

- Anthropologists going to the field used cameras enthusiastically to 'capture' disappearing cultures and sociocultural features (rituals)
- Objective recording device
- Method for scientific documentation
- Method for recording and representing culture
- Mandatory 'tool kit' for research
- Anthropologists interest decreased and many anthropologists used only photography to illustrate and for scientific-realist research
- A new branch of Anthropologists, Visual anthropologists, uses it as a reflexive tool
- Studying 'photographic cultures'
- Photography as a subjective recording device
- Collaborative photography and

Distortion, Framing and the Multiple Meanings of Photographs:

1. Photographic practice is complex and it is built in a series of perceptions about memory [recalls past images], about time [capturing fleeting moments], about science [it is an accurate reflection of reality] and accuracy [it captures details].

2. Photography ethnography is different from other types of photography because it is determined by discourse [anthropological discourses e.g. reflexivity, context] and content.

3. Anthropologists use ethnographic photography to gain useful and meaningful information

4. The viewer of ethnographic photography determines and defines its content. A photograph appears ethnographic to the viewer because the viewer already has classifications of what is an 'anthropological reality', or how this reality should look like

5. Photographs can have different meanings, sometimes even contradictory meanings. One photograph can invest different context with a meaning that is implied by the viewer. Ethnographers need to negotiate the meaning people invest pictures with, and maintain a sense that ethnographic photography is a continuous dialogue –rather than just a 'take-and-go-and-present' with the viewer, the discipline and its subjects

6. Photographs can move in and out of anthropology and acquire different meanings, intended or not. As Pink points out: *' a photograph [taken during fieldwork] had no single meaning, but it was re-appropriated and given new significance and uses in each context"(*2001:51)

7. Photographs are ways of framing.

Today's quotation

> *..Ethnographic photography can potentially construct continuities between the visual culture of an academic discipline and that of the subjects or collaborators in the research. Thus ethnographers can hope to create photographic representations that refer to 'local' visual cultures and simultaneously respond to the interest of academic disciplines. To do so involves a certain amount of research into uses and understandings of photography in the culture and society of the fieldwork location. In some cases this could mean using recent theoretical studies such as Lury's (1988) work on photography, identity and memory in modern western societies (…) However, researchers may often find that the photographic dimension of the culture they are working in has been virtually undocumented. (Pink 2001:5)*

References and Further Reading:

Berger, J, (1972) *Ways of Seeing,* London: Penguin. 700 BER
Burgin, V. (ed) (1982) *Thinking Photography,* London: Macmillan. 770.1 THI
Devereaux, L. and Hillman, R. (eds) (1995) *Fields of Vision: essays in film studies, visual anthropology and photography,* Berkeley: University of California Press. 301.161 FIE
Gross, L., Stuart Katz, J., and Ruby, J. (eds) (1988) *Image Ethics: the moral rights of subjects in photographs, film and television,* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 175.1 IMA
Pink, S 2001 Doing Visual Ethnography. Sage Publications:London
Sontag, S. (1977) *On Photography,* New York: Penguin. 770 SON
Szarkowski, J. (1980) *The Photographer's Eye,* London: Secker and Warburg
Wells, L. (ed.) (1997) *Photography: a critical introduction,* New York: Routledge. 770 PHO

Exercise: Framing and interpreting

Use these quotes to examine the pictures of your classmates (use your own pictures, too). Each quote represents a possible way to interpret a picture. For example:

Are they subjective?
Fragmented?
In which way are they abstract?
What is selected in them?
What kind of reductions do you appreciate?
What kind of ethnographic context would you need to understand the picture better (or not)?
Are they a slice of reality?
Do they imply a transformation of objects?
Do they 'beautify', make things and people into art? If so, how? (what kind of selections, reductions, transformations do they use in order to do so?)
What symbols can you appreciate in the pictures?
Do they appropriate reality? Distort reality?

Image and subjectivity:

...first of all a photograph is not only an image... it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask... a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation (light waves reflected by objects) - a material vestige of its subject in a way that no painting could be... having a photograph of Shakespeare would be like having a nail from the True Cross. (Sontag, 1977:154)
The invention of photography produced a radically new picture-making process - a process based not on synthesis but on selection. (Szarkowski,1980:intro)

To quote out of context is the essence of the photographer's art. His central problem is a simple one: what shall he include, what shall he reject? The line of decision between in and out is the picture's edge. (Szarkowski,1980:70)

Fragmented abstractions:

Through photography the world becomes a series of unrelated, freestanding particles... The camera makes reality atomic, manageable and opaque. (Sontag, 1977:22-23)
Selective ability: emphasis and concealment

Much of the reality was filtered out in the static little black and white image, and some of it was exhibited with unnatural clarity, and exaggerated importance. The subject and picture were not the same, although they would afterwards seem so. It was the photographer's problem to see not simply the reality before him but the still invisible picture, and to make his choices in terms of the latter. (Szarkowski, 1980: intro)

Abstraction and reductionism

Photography concentrates one's eye on the superficial. For that reason it obscures the hidden life which glimmers through the outlines of things like a play of light and shade. One can't catch that even with the sharpest lens. One has to grope for it by feeling... the automatic camera doesn't multiply men's eyes but only gives a fantastically simplified fly's eye view. (Gustave Janouch in Sontag, 1977:206)

Transformation of objects and subjects

Photography... is now incapable of photographing a tenement or a rubbish heap without transfiguring it. not to mention a river or an electric cable factory: in front of these photography can now only say 'how beautiful'... It has succeeded in turning abject poverty itself, by handling it in a modish, technically perfect way, into an object of pleasure. (Walter Benjamin in Burgin 1982:23)

A 'slice of reality': turning subjects into objects

> **To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by other and yet not recognised for oneself. A naked body has to be seen as an object in order to become a nude. (The sight of it as an object stimulates the use of it as an object.) Nakedness reveals itself. Nudity is placed on display. (Berger, 1974:54)**

Appropriating reality:

> **The most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us a sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads - as an anthology of images... to collect photographs is to collect the world... to photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed, (Sontag, 1977:3)**

Symbols:

> **A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck. It drifts away into a soft, abstract pastness, open to any kind of reading (or matching to other photographs) ... Because each photograph is only a fragment, its moral and emotional weight depends on where it is inserted. A photograph changes according to the context in which it is seen. (Sontag, 1977: 71, 105)**

Capturing images and storing images:

> **In a literal sense, ethnographic collections are captors of Other People's histories, since their function is to enshrine the traditions and experience of other cultures through the collection of their material artefacts. (Pinney, Journal of Museum Ethnography)**

Example of framing, and overt aesthicisation of urban landscapes: see larger overhead

Tokyo 2001
A series of photographs that have meaning for me.

13 Lecture 6 Film I

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

What is an ethnographic film? What gives a film the category of 'ethnographic'? Is video/film a medium for ethnographic research, for representational purposes?

The importance of ethnographic film:

In 1980s new video technology –cheaper, long battery, easiness of use- offered anthropologists the possibility of adding a new tool to their research methods inventory. Video started being used, as it happened with the Internet in late 90s, as a media with to create anthropological knowledge.

What is an ethnographic video?

Ethnographic video,, traditionally relates too objective research, opposed to creative footage.
On the side of this argument, Heider argues that ethnographic film should be:

- Objective
- Unedited
- not manipulated
- guided by scientific and ethnographic principles, rather than cinematographic intentions. Intended to be stored as a film archive,
- screened to anthropological audience:
- project of recording objective reality.

Peter Fuchs suggests that ethnographic film should be:

- monothematic (having a unity of time, place, group and action)
- it should have a strict chronology;
- and no artifice or staging of scenes
- accompanied by a written ethnography

This would help us achieve 'an approximation of reality': 'Film is the tool, and ethnography the goal'.

Paul Hockings suggests that there are four major functions for ethnographic film:
Teaching
archiving cultural data
designing research projects
bringing anthropology to the public.

Pink argues that there are three flaws with these arguments:

- It is impossible or inappropriate to video people/culture undisturbed.
- Ethnographic knowledge does not necessarily exist as observable facts, it is originated in the field.
- What makes a video ethnographic depends on the judgement of the viewer.

Pink argues: Video footage can never be purely ethnographic

You watched a short video from my fieldwork:
Is it an ethnographic video?
As a viewer what did you think of its ethnographic quality?

All films - including ethnographic films - are framed in a number of ways, by the mechanical frame, the decision making process, post-production, publicity, distribution and by the viewer's categorisation of the film.

Today's quotations:

> *"Without theses spoken/written signs, the film would be indistinguishable from other documentaries. In other words, ethnographic filmmakers have not developed a way of articulating or organizing images in a manner that is related structurally to anthropological perceptions of the world, and produced in a framework of anthropological visual symbolic forms are conventionalized into a code or argot". Ruby 16*

> *"Video is undoubtedly good fur visual 'note-taking' but such uses ought to be qualified with a rejection of the naïve assumption that video records an untainted reality in favour of a reflexive approach that accounts for how video can become part of a focus group discussion or interview".*
> *Pink 87*

References and Suggested Readings

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Devereaux, L. and Hillman, R. (eds) (1995) *Fields of Vision: essays in film studies, visual anthropology and photography,* Berkeley: University of California Press. 301.161 FIE
Henley, P. (1985) 'British Ethnographic Film: recent developments, in *Anthropology Today 1.1:5-17*
Loizos, P. (1980) 'Granada Television's Disappearing World series: an appraisal, in *American Anthropologist,* 82:573-594
Loizos, P.(1989) 'Film and Fidelity' *Anthropology Today,* 5.3:25-26
Loizos, P.(1993) *Innovation in Ethnographic Film: from innocence to self-consciousness, 1955-1985,* Manchester: Manchester University Press
Morphy, H. (1994) 'The interpretation of ritual: reflections from film on anthropological practice' in *Man,* (NS) 29.1:117-46
Pink, S (2001) Doing Visual Ethnography. Sage Publications: London
Ruby, J 1975 Is An Ethnographic film a Filmic Ethnography? In the Anthropology of Visual Communication, Vol 2, No2.

Suggested viewing:
Nanook of the North, L Flaherty, 1922 (see handout)
Asch, T. (Dir.) and Chagnon, N. Film (1971) The Ax Fight
Barbash, I. and Taylor, L. (1993) In and Out of Africa.
Any of the 59 films in the video library

14 Lecture 7 Film II

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue

What is realism? What is a documentary? Does an ethnographic film differs from documentary realism?

Categories of Ethnographic film:

Footage
Research film ethnographic documentaries
Ethnographic televisions documentaries
education and information films
non-fictional films
fiction films

Ethnographic video: any video footage that is of ethnographic interest or is used to represent ethnographic knowledge and used as such.
Debates about the definition of ethnographic film have concentrated on documentaries and the roots (cinema verite –realistic cinema)

Ethics and Film:

The early days of ethnographic film in the 1930s-40s were closely linked with realist cinema and filmmakers: e.g. Jean Renoir who made *La Regle Du Jeu,* in 1939, and Jean Rouch (*Chronique d'un Ete* 1961) and Rosellini. They aimed to present certain realities as 'reality'. The film was invisible; the second relations that made the film were removed from view…if this was done what was left was 'reality'. Rosellini suggested a series of guidelines which would enable the making of a realist stance, and even beyond, to remove the veils that conceal reality:

-long camera takes
-fluid camera movements
-no jarring
-location filming
-natural light
-no close-ups
-individual at center stage
-no acting experience
-informal dialogues
-lots of scenery

These ideas not only precluded the event of realist cinema, they also gave key pointers in the execution of documentaries. The documentary emerged with the attempt to reflect the reality of social life, to present life 'as it is' without distortion, to present people [rather than actors], with no script [only real words, from real people] –as if people would not have performative identities (next lectures), with plenty of scenery to set the mood of the 'environment' [man and nature], with long camera takes [life is not edited].The birth of the documentary in Anthropology, however, does not owe to a series of ideas on how to execute and film realistically. It owes greatly to Nanook of the North, who became the first ethnographic documentary ever [more detailed information on Nanook of the North in your tutorial handout and viewing]

Documentaries put too much emphasis on a scripted story: they subordinate the visual to oral texts (oral texts as the primary means of communication). While Nanook of the North stands as a 'pure' documentaries, later commercial television documentaries, clear heirs to the cinematographic realism, re-inforced Nanook's narrative strategy: the speaker's voice [in Nanook, the voice is a text, which, in most respects set it apart from future documentaries]. The narrator's voice can go from a mere conductor, to the 'specialist voice' [often a male, academic, white]. These lasts tend to fall into the 'scientist' mode [and sometimes, colonial attitude] where the speaker is endowed with authority to talk about culture, from an outside, scientificed perspective.
New challenges in documentaries:

- different voices
- interview sytles
- first person accounts
- video-diaries

More conscious filming:

Films and photographs are heavily constructed, by the choices about what to shoot and when,

and editing. As David McDougall says, 'no ethnographic film is merely a record of another society: it is always a record of a meeting between a film maker and that society.'

- Increased number of films produced by indigenous people
- In reflexive anthropology the ethnographer makes visible the dialogue, improvisations, learning processes, negotiations from which the work emerges and how [if] is dealt with as part of the ethnographic information.

Ethical issues to consider:
Rather than a series of dogmatic recipes for the dos and don'ts is best to keep an open mind and ask yourself these questions below:

- Is it ethical in the first place to make another culture the 'object' of study and recording? If you have doubts about this question ask yourself the following: are you planning to do a scientific film, centred on an object of study? If so, consider a less scientific-approach and plan for a more flexible, encompassing and subjective approach. The boundary between object and subject only exist from a scientific perspective. If your challenge that perspective, your new positioning in the field, will improve your understanding of the local visual systems.
- How this representation of them might be perceived in other contexts?
- How much control do they have over the representational process? Are they co-authors?
- Who decides what to film/record, what is important, what should be omitted?
- Do the subjects of the film have any editorial control?
- Do you incorporate other people's voices, other people's films, video-diaries?
- Do your subjects have any control over the distribution of the film? Do you?
- Do they have a share in any profits which may be made from the use of their images?
- Have they been asked to think about image contracts?
- Does the work objectify, exoticise the subjects?
- Does the film reflect how filming - and other visual systems- is understood by all the participants? Do the subjects of the film fully understand the different uses and audiences to whom it may be shown?
- Have you considered the visual systems, and usage of film that exists locally?

How should ethnographic film be?
Different views:

- 70's represent whole cultures. Ensure scientific values. Attempt to film 'whole' contexts, minimally edited
- 80s's should be informed by existing theory and according to anthropological demands
- 90s's used to challenge the dominant discourse on objectivity. Emphasise experimental, personal experience. It appreciates the subjectivities of individuals and filmakers.

Today's quotation:

> *Since all films are cultural artefacts, many can tell us as much about the societies that produced them as about these they purport to describe. (David McDougall, 1978:405)*
>
> *Cinematic realism (in either fiction or documentary) is a mediated construct, not the direct representation of unconditional truth. (Banks, 1988)*

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McDougall, D. (1978) 'Ethnographic Film: failure or promise' in *Annual Review of Anthropology,* Vol 7. 1978 pp 405-426
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Video Library and Handout

15 Lecture 8 Indigenous Art and the Global Discourse

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

How can we analyse aboriginal art? The Art of two hunter-gatherer groups: Aboriginal Art in Australia and The Art of Inuit Women. How can we learn about the Aboriginal way of seeing the landscape? What aesthetic ideas are employed? Can the organisations principles of this society be understood through the analysis of its visual forms? What is the impact of the global discourses on indigenous art?

Aboriginal systems of visual representation:
Tend to contain references to every aspect of culture, from belief to economic values
Concentrates on map making of the land
Complex system of visual values (overhead Australia Aboriginal): motifs
Dot paintings
Bark paintings
Rock Art
Brilliance
Marks left by people and animals crossing landscape

Overhead Inuit art:
Women
Dress patterns
Lines
Birds
Fishing and camping
Faces
Figurative, flat lines
Human and Bird faces
Women with children

Aboriginal/Inuit life:

- Small scale
- Mobile
- Hunter Gathering
- Oral traditions
- Bands, clans and camps
- Egalitarian
- Dispossessed from land
- Landscape is central
- Single body of knowledge: the Ancestral Law (Australia)
- Shamans and Gendered knowledge (Inuit)
- Strong communities
- Fight for land rights and traditional identity
- Alienation from past identity, fight to redefine aboriginal/Inuit identity

Aboriginal representations of land:
No division between art and land maps
Description of the ancestral journey: Dreaming
Birds, people and camps

Globalisation and Colonialistation:
Colonialisation exploited existing human/environmental relations, including aboriginal relations to land
Land as an economic good – Land as a source of identity
Dispossession
-oral.v.written texts – art reflects 'traditions' and 'a way of life'
New economic and political changes
Tourism

-art as a form of reflecting changes on aboriginal identity and fight for defining identity and land rights
traditional art forms (religion: ancestral discourse) supplemented by commercial tradition (new discourses on identity)

Alcohol
-art reflects dispossession, lost of 'spirit', representing memories of the past, alcoholism as a form of social criticism.

Responses to domination and global markets:
Art on display: anger – sacrality : concealment through modification of art motifs. Sacred objects replaced by dots. Art inspired on religious system but modified for different visual consumption.
Fluidity and continuous change of Aboriginal artistic tradition
Inuit women redefining gender values through art, social critique, personal reflections: my life, my people.

Shifting cultural contexts:
What is the cultural context of Aboriginal Art in present time? Should art reflect tradition? The lost of tradition? The fight for reclaiming aboriginal identity? Dispossession? Or are these western reflections?
-Sutton (1986 in Layton 1992): Art is not an aboriginal concept. Focus on objects for sale.
-Aboriginal Art (Urban Aborigines): To bridge cultures through art
-Restore a sense of order and linear continuity of time (as opposed to discontinuity), history as memory, a project of imagining life built in present times.

Today's quotations:

> *"On reflection, however, there is no reason why a painting has to be seen for aesthetic factors to be important in its production and in its effect. For example, a painting may only have to be known to be a type of object that is aesthetically powerful for it to achieve its purposes; it may not be necessary for it to be seen to be so. There are contexts in which paintings are displayed publicly and in which everyone has the opportunity to look at them. For example, mortuary poles that are erected in memory of a dead person have designs painted on them which are similar to those painted on coffin-lids. Their aesthetic effect is known, and hence the aesthetic effect of coffin painting is, or may be, taken for granted'*
> *From Dull to Brillian (Murphy 1992:187)*

> *"to understand the cultural context of the art –its meaning and purpose for the artist- it is necessary to look beyond purely artistic considerations, to the place of hunter-gatherer cultures in the modern world" The Art of Aboriginal Australia(Layton 1992:154)*

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Jelinek, J. (1989) The great art of the early Australians : The study of the evolution and role of rock art in the society of Australian hunters and gatherers, Brno: Moravian Museum, Anthropos Institute. Q 759.01130994 JEL
Layton, R. (1991) *The anthropology of art,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 709.01 LAY
Marcus, G. and Myers, F. (eds) (1995) *The Traffic in Culture: refiguring art and anthropology,* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. 700.103 TRA
Morphy, H. (ed) (1989) *Animals into art,* London: Unwin Hyman. 704.9432 ANI
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Shaman's wife 1980 by Pitseolak Ashoona. Isumavut

Engraving on stencil and stone
"The Shaman…they were esquimos (Inuit) like everybody else, but they had odd powers. They had power over the hunt, they could attract animals so they could be killed – there were good and bad shamans, but most of the people were afraid of them" Pictures of my life by Pitseolak Ashoona. Isumavut (1992:58)

16 Lecture 9 Hypermedia: ethnographic electronic hypertext

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

what is a hypermedia text? How do anthropologists use the Internet and CD-ROMs to produce ethnographies? How does an electronic hypermedia ethnography looks like? What makes an electronic hypermedia text, an electronic ethnography?

Electronic texts (hypermedia text) are increasingly used to produce, store, represent and view ethnographic materials. They have become a new medium of representation

Implications: author, user, medium
Implications: literacy, ownership, copyrights

What is an electronic hyper media text?
A combination of texts, film, photo, sound related to each other by electronic links (hyperlinks) usually delivered over the Internet and CD_ROMS.

The links define the quality of the 'relations' (linear, non-linear) between units of text, images or other. These links are represented with words and visual symbols, and can affect both text and photography. This linkage, 'click here', allows users to follow the connection between units, and to establish what is called as 'interaction' with the units and with the meaning produced in this media. Hypermedia imitates text but it is richer, non-linear, multisequential and highly visual.

Pink argues: '*NO hypermedia text is essentially ethnographic'*. The author, users, and routes of implementation determine the ethnographic quality.

Hyperlink question images by presenting different narratives and it can acquire different meanings depending on the use.

Hyperlink texts can be very elaborated (designed with complex 'navigation') or experimental. An essential quality of hyperlink texts is that they are often open-ended. Always 'under construction', thus they challenge conventional academic narratives. They are never completed. Hypermedia allows for multiple interpretations, re-representations, fragmented, altered. It allows us to explore boundaries with other text, images, videos and ideas. It also breaks down the single authorship that defines conventional ethnographic texts. The producer and end user are constantly having to negotiate the boundaries and fluidity of their relationship. It creates new kinds of relations between authors, designers and readers/users. It is a highly reflexive medium, one that has enabled anthropologist to think critically about classical issues of representation: voice, ethics, and so on.

Hyperlink texts are constructed in a way that make it possible for us to call the Internet (or CD-ROMS0 a new visual system.

A successful design depends on:
- Coherence, flexible authorship
- The navigation must keep in mind the user and the user's need.
- User need to construct coherence but it does not need to be linear.
- The design has an impact on how knowledge is constructed. So does iconography, and how it is produced

Iconography and the Internet
One needs to be aware that hypermedia text will always reflect iconographic choices. These impinge on how the text and images are consumed and understood. These become visual systems

in their own right. The role of making icons for the Internet brings internet developers and users together to new venues for consume, spectatorship, sharing and creativity. Websites are embedded with visual statements. Iconography and Internet navigation are inextricably linked. Icons related to navigation are often the most taken for granted images on the Internet.

Navigating through internet pages depend on heavily on hyperlinked icons, and hyperlinked instruction (g) (back). Clearly and hierarchically organised navigational icons are the key element to any successful web delivery. A sense of fluidity between pages can be achieved with a right combination of colour, minimal written instruction and well designed icons.

Today's quote:

> *Where connections between phenomena are as interrelated as they are in human communities, the job of orchestrating even a limited degree of interconnectivity in the written medium is a struggle at best (Howard 1988 :305)*
>
> *At best ethnographers can only reconstruct fragments of a subjective experience of reality. (Pink 2001:167)*

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Ruby, J 1975 'Ethnography as *Trompe L' Oiel*: Film and Anthropology' in J. Ruby (ed.) *A Crack in the Mirror: Reflexive perspectives in Anthropology*. Philadelphia University Press: Philadelphia

Academic and Ethnographic hypertexts

Banks, M 1988 'Interactive multimedia and anthropology – a sceptical view', http://www.rsl.ox.ac.uk/isca/marcus.banks.01.html
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Fischer, M and Zeitlyn, D (n.D.) 'Mambila Nggwun – the constructin and deployment of multiple meaning in ritual' http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/dz/Nggwun/nggwun_1.html
Pink, S (n.d) Visual Ethnographies
http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/incite/spinkabstractandsupportingmats.htm
and excellent site– Sarah Pink's visualising ethnography:
http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ss/visualising_ethnography/
C-SAP projects include ethnographic hypertext and CD-ROM
http://www.c-sap.bham.ac.uk/Projects/findings/ShowAll.asp
Gledhill, J and Harris, M (n.d.) Peasant Social Worlds and their Transformations, http://res1.man.ac.uk/multimedia
Etzgar, E (n.d.)http://wings.buffalo.edu/anthropology/anthroglobe/field_experience
Stirling, 1988 [1965] Turkish Village. http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/Tvillage/StirlingContents.html
Add Kinship tutorial, and Pink's site

17 Lecture 10 Maps and Murals: Landscapes and Identity

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

Why do maps and murals constitute visual systems? How can we use murals and maps to describe 'cultural landscapes'? How are murals and maps used for political and ownership purposes?

Maps and Murals:

Maps and Murals may be considered as forms of representation which depict cultural landscapes. They also depict relations with the environment. Maps and Murals reflect both external and internal cultural realities. There are many types of maps. In many parts of the world, songs, dances describe the landscapes. In other parts of the world, represented lines in paper describe landscapes. The supports for maps (as well as for murals) change depending on cultural values. Their visibility and meaning also changes (some meanings may be concealed and others added/mystified [e.g. Mercator]). There are also different types of murals, their life and meaning also changes depending on the painter and on the observer.

Maps:

- Historical documents
- Record of cultural constructions of landscape
- Spatial stories
- Vehicle of communication
- Cultural Landscapes
- Memorials (living and dead)
- Adapting to times
- Reflecting change

The meaning of maps and murals is reliant upon a certain amount of understanding of their context, as we will see in the class-examples, maps are highly politicised objects (and venues)

Murals

- Intersectional landscapes
- Murals are also forms of representation, often found in urban areas.
- Easy to dismiss
- Political insight
- Display of cultural ideologies
- Boundary-defining
- Short-life
- Visual dominance
- Visual resistance
- Grass-roots
- Limited meaning
- Represent the community
- Tied to a stock of meanings
- Site-specific
- defiant public space
- message of resistance
- dead memorial
- Destroyed by police/opposing community
- Associated/sponsored by paramilitary activity
- Touristic consumption

The meaning of a mural is reliant on the physicality of the place. Its life is short-lived, highly politicised, loci of cultural and ideological resistance.
Two ethnographic cases: the Dreaming as a map. The Belfast Murals.

Today's quote:

> *If you want to know what is actually occurring inside, underneath, at the centre, at any given moment, art is a truer guide than politics, more often than not. (Percy Wyndham Lewis [1884-1957], talking on the Belfast murals - author and painter.)*

We've obviously become more aware. To begin with, it was like the murals went up, and young people had something to say but nowhere to say it, so it was like, fire something up on a wall. It was really spontaneous and sort of reacting... but now we've become more aware of design and colour and what we want to see. [Local voices commenting on murals]

Recommended reading

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Woods, O, 1995, *'Seeing is believing. murals in Derry*. Derry, Guildhall Press.

Exercise 1
The links below on the Belfast murals are a very good case for analysing the use of the Internet and exemplifying many of the issues discussed in our previous lecture about iconography. Use these examples to revise the theme of the Internet, and link them to what is being said here. Is this an ethnographic site? Does it contain ethnographic hypertexts? Can Internet sites be considered 'maps'? Explain

http://irelandsown.net/murals7.html
http://www.wfn.org/2003/10/msg00236.html
http://www.members.tripod.com/mise_eire/belfastmurals.html
http://www.dannymorrison.com/gallery/Belfast_Murals
http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/images/posters/nationalist/index.html

EXERCISE 2
Who produces the murals? Why do they have a fleeting quality -how does this affect their interpretation?
What do you remember about the Aboriginal maps?
How could you use what he has said in previous lectures about cross-cultural comparison? What could you compare -between Australian maps and N. Ireland murals? and why?

18 Lecture 11 Tattooing and Body Modification

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

Why is tattooing important for understanding the value of visual analysis? Why is the Body important? What kind of values are 'inscribed' in the body?
Embodiment and Wrapping: inscribing values in the body and dressing the body.
From Body to Person

Bodies and Values

When individuals are born (and sometimes even before birth) individuals acquire roles and values. New roles and values are learnt as the individual grows up. These roles and values are adopted [also rejected] by the individuals and the group. Individuals and groups invest much time and energy in creating ways of assessing this values and roles, much time in controlling and rejecting values and groups. In fact, we spent most of our times debating about our values and our role(s) in society. This is the reason why anthropologist pays so much attention to the processes where people deal with these values and roles. These process are eminently visual and define the properties of most visual systems.

How are values engendered?

- Adopting [rejecting] the beliefs prescribed by a social group. These beliefs and values can be 'learned' [understood, learned, embodied, studied…] through various cultural forms: representations, formal and informal education…
- Speaking the language and using the classificatory language of the group
- By 'habitus' and performance. Performing actions that are established, people express and internalise particular values. Performance and habitus also demonstrate others that the subject has learned the values of the group.
- Participating in the aesthetics of your role – performing visually and aesthetically as 'is expected' of your role (e.g. women should wear make-up, veils…)

Aesthetics, performance and values are related through the body, and through the process we call 'embodiment. Aesthetics are experienced at a emotional and subjective level. Aesthetics are central to the creation of values and performance is laden with aesthetic values. Aesthetics are also crucial in how 'embodiment' and 'learning values' is related to emotions. The body is essential to the process of embodying experience.

Hastrup has described the body as the locus of purposive action, and identity as the 'theatre of the self', As Turner puts it:

[the] human body can epitomise and evaluate social life. It is therefore an instrument which is dynamically incarnated. (in Schechner, 1985)

These discussions about the body have helped anthropologist reach new theoretical venues. One of the most important ideas about the body that has been created is perhaps the idea of embodiment. You will often read and hear that ritual and social practices are 'embodied'. In fact, tattooing and wrapping are ways in which people 'absorb' and contain ideas about the body itself.

Strathern, in her definition of embodiment argues that:
Embodiment encompasses both, person and body and explicits a relationship. '*It is a term for a state or a process that results from the continuous interaction of body and mind. (p.8)*
Embodiment is neither a conscious or unconscious thing. Embodiment is memory and experience put into action.

Can you give me an example of 'embodied practice'?

Things done to the body: or how to make persons:

There are many occasions where we find body adornment and body modifications: rituals, beauty treatments, religious practices…
Forms of Modification:

- Body painting
- Hair styling
- Tattooing
- Piercing
- Wrapping
- Finger Amputation
- Genital Mutilation
- Nails/High shoes
- Surgical enlargements/reductions
- Mummification
- Veiling and Dressing
- Facial/Body hair removal

Why are they practiced?

Gell argues that tattooing (we could apply this to most if not all body modifications) is about 'making persons', it is about 'making persons mould into social requirements':

The point Gell is trying to make is that in order for us to become social persons, we must conform to what he calls 'political necessities'. In some societies, these political necessities may take the form of tattooing the face. In other societies these political necessities may take the form of shaving, or varnishing nails, refusing to use make-up and so on.

The importance of tattoos has widely been known for many years. This is partially due with a Western fascination with the body, and what other cultures do to the body. Wrapping (wrapping the body with clothes, for example) is as common as tattooing but it only started to have theoretical relevance in 1990s although anthropologists have always noted the importance of clothing and body adornments. (You can read an example of analysis of wrapping -and analysis of art- in the Wakakusa file)

'Doing things to the body and with the body' has infinite number of ways of further communication about ourselves as well as to conceal information about our identities (Hendry 1999). However, as I argue is also about enhancing values. Wrapping and tattooing, these two in particular, not only beautify the body but also enhance aesthetic values. In Western values people believe concealing and modifying the body is 'wrong' because there is a belief that things are best when 'natural'. Culture is seen as a transformative, negative sphere, one that corrupts nature (nature exists in a pristine estate). In many other societies, cultural transformations are positive (tattooing), concealment is a positive thing (wrapping). What matters is not these values are about nature , culture and truth. In other societies, tattooing is about giving value to culture. Tattooing and wrapping It is a way to make the 'concealment' a positive thing. The beliefs on nature and culture enter a more fluid dialogue.

Clothes, tattoos are useful for transmitting information about their owners and carriers. Visual anthropology starts with this questions but tries to go beyond what we see by making further questions about these people, and about the context where they make these visual systems and visual 'performances'.

Anthropology still hopes to go beyond this point (understanding choices and context) in order to ask more fundamental questions about 'the body' (why do people do things to the body? why is the body important? Why is that each different culture do different things to the body? What is 'performance'? Why do people 'wrap' things and people?

Maori Tattoos

The Maori of New Zealand are well known for their body art or Moko. Moko is related to the belief that certain lines and decorations are a symbol inscribed in the body.. Both men and women were tattooed from the onset of puberty; becoming a way to beautify the youth, give strength and status, give them a sense of belonging to a kin group and creating gender differences.

Moko:
Inscribe social categories in the body Act of social memory

Political statement
Reclaiming the past
Accepting social requirements

Highly elaborate symbolism: symmetry and asymmetry
Displaying values
Body of Law

Gender and tattoo
Skin as a kind of social place where people elaborate symbolic relations between the sexes. Tattoos (malu): control of sexuality.

The meaning of tattoos can vary and adapt to social change, and so anthropological interpretations have to be revised and their validity assessed.

To sum up:
Foucault, like Durkheim (albeit less clearly in Durkheim's case) argues that 'things done to the body' are expressions of power. By this he means that when people tattoo a child, or pierce a nose, or even do physical mutilations to others, they are trying to get control over the body (and the making of persons and personhood) of that subject. However, as they argue, it is not done for the sake of 'having control' only. It is done to show others (other groups, other families, the state and so on) that persons have power over persons, over the body. Tattoos 'make statements' that say that there is a type of person that it is not given by birth or by law. Becoming a person depends on other people's control over your body. Foucault argues that this type of power is a general element of social relations, it can happen anywhere. What do you think?

Today's quotation:

the skin is the locus of symbolic elaboration
Strathern 1971 'The self in Self-Decoration'

Readings

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Canela Facial painting and ear piercing: left
Moko design: right

Exercise:
Could you describe a hen night? Reflect on hen nights use of clothes, make up, analyse the components of its basic 'rituals' and aesthetics. Discuss the importance of the body and personhood in a hen night, and discuss who has power and how is power manifested by people in these contexts. If you don't have knowledge of hen nights (stag nights) try to find an example from any case where people move from one stage to another stage (i. e single to married).

19 Lecture 12: Performance and Ritual

Summary of the Lecture

Today's issue:

How are people socialised into particular beliefs and values through performance? Agency, constrains, creativity and participation in performance and rituals.

Of Persons and Performances:

Last lecture we looked at body and values, and how these were 'embodied' and 'inscribed' in the body. Towards the end of the lecture we discuss how embodied and inscribed practices defined the persons and their bodies, and how these embodied practices were central to the role and the performative power of individuals. Here we follow the theme of persons and personhood but we will focus on the meaning of performance, ritual and the importance of the media (television) in reflecting persons and performance.

> *... it is obvious that any culturally designated event is always in some way a piece of drama* (Parkin, 1996:xviii).

Performance is a dynamic process where individuals express and transmit the conditions that define their selves, their roles and person(hood)s. Performances are situations where meaning is absorbed through emotions. They are heavily dependant on how emotions are believed by those experiencing [& observing] the performance.

Performance, even those in ritual contexts, which may often follow a pattern and given structure, are not just 'theatrical events'. Schechner, for instance, argues that '*the performers are changed by the activity of performing'* (1985:4).

Theories of performance:

- Mimetic behaviour – Schechner/Aristotle
- Representational behaviour –Cooked: Levi-Strauss : action is transformed through culture into a symbolic product.
- Interactive behaviour
- Intentional
- Aims to be transformational or 'effective': changes society
- It changes the performer
- Always emergent
- It requires skills and receptivity

Areas of investigation:

- Face to face interaction
- Semiotic and non-verbal language
- Public use of speech
- Rhetoric and concealment
- Storytelling
- Dance
- Acting/Theatrical Performance
- Wrapping the body/objects/symbols
- Games/ Sports
- Rituals
- Rehearsals
- Politeness and verbal acquisition

Strategies in performance

- Timing
- Charisma
- Concentration
- Focus
- Dispersion
- Emptiness
- Spontaneity
- Elaborate rehearsal (Japan)
- Knowing context
- Lack of spontaneity/performance routines (Japan)
- Capturing attention
- Contextualise actions
- Enter the 'flow' (effortless/natural)
- Enter 'framed behaviour': suspension of rules during play –internal set of rules internal to the play/game last until play ends
- Ensemble

How to analyse performance:

- seeing regularities and patterns
- analysing [posit&negative] valued performance activities: does it accomplish a successful representation of symbolic reality? Is it spontaneous, true, skilful, effective?
- Understand new theories of performance: creativity and constrain
- Understand the context of the performance (in some context the 'western' line between reality/fiction, authentic/illusion may not be appropriate to other cultural contexts)
- Understand the big picture. Turner.
    - Drama
    - Ritual
    - Liminal Behaviour
    - Social Dramas
    - Ritual Processes

Culture is often treated as 'text' to be read and analysed. The study of performance shows that culture is dynamic, unexpected, and that much of the unexpected changes are the result of effective performative activity and subjective individuality.

Theories of ritual and performance

Functionalist: human behaviour
Organic: it releases social tension.
Restrictive: rituals are not communicative, they produce conformity
Antagonistic: rituals pervaded by differences and competing interest
Political: rituals engage with the political
Performance: rituals as text
Drama: ritual as tragedy and social drama
backstage Goffman59
Backstage: reflect an 'inside' reality
Techniques: there are technologies of the self
Contextual: they are performative behaviour
Agency: individuals act as agents
Intentional: the performer is a motivated, reflexive body
Spectatorship: the audience performs, it mediates the meaning of the performer

In the last lecture we said that embodiment is neither a conscious or unconscious thing. Embodiment is memory and experience put into action. Performance is intentional embodiment. We could think of tattooing and wrapping and other types of body modification [physical and emotional, as those that take place when performing] as performance through which persons are produced. Performance is as a result, is an act of producing persons; as a process, performance is a type of modification of the self.

Ethnocentric models of performance: draw on western dramaturgical concepts: the notion of illusion. However, anthropologist argue performance is the social construction of reality. As Schieffelin notes:

'Performance does not construct a symbolic reality in the manner of presenting an argument, description or commentary. Rather, it does so by socially constructing a situation in which participants experience symbolic meanings as part of the process of what they are actually doing' 1985:709

As Hughes-Freeland (1998) argues: Performance is an interactive [an risky] process.

Today's quotations:

> *If man is a sapient animal, a toolmaking animal, a self-making animal, a symbol-using animal, he is, no less, a performing animal. Turner 1986:81)*

> *' A performance is not necessarily more meaningful than other events in one's life, but it is more deliberately so; a performance is, among other things, a deliberate effort to represent, to say something about something (Peacock 1990:208)*

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20 Tutorial 1
Japanese Colours

In class we are going to see and examine a series of objects -in a group exercise

This tutorial will look at the meaning of 'seeing'. We will ask ourselves, what do we see here? How does the cultural understanding of an object affects our capacity to 'see' the object? Are we culture-blind? How do we start 'seeing' objects from another culture? how do we analyse visual and material culture?

The tutorial concentrates on the problems we would encounter when doing fieldwork in a different culture from our own. What is that Japanese see when they look at these material objects? How do this objects relate to other aspects of Japanese social life.

The object of the tutorial is to ask 10 questions related to the objects. Making good questions is quite difficult. What kind of questions will help us 'see' the meaning of the objects under display? Gather as much information as you can on the objects by asking the lecturer and your classmates. Pay close attention at how the objects are displayed, their shapes, possible symbols, colours and so on.

Write the questions and answers below. A class-secretary will collect the Questions

Questions	**Answers**
1. …	**11. …**
2. …	**12. …**
3. …	**13. …**
4. …	**14. …**
5. …	**15. …**
6. …	**16. …**
7. …	**17. …**
8. …	**18. …**
9. …	**19. …**
10. …	**20. …**

What did you think it was?

Was it difficult to guess any particular object? Why?

Does this object relate to other aspects of Japanese social life?

How else would you extract meaning from these objects?

Why would fieldwork be essential Why would fieldwork be essential for gathering this kind of information?

21 Tutorial 2
The Bilum in Papua New Guinea

Material Culture

This tutorial reflects upon the theme we saw in the lecture about Material Culture. It also links with the lecture on Body and Performance, and with more general anthropological debates on gender. In this tutorial we look at one ethnographic case, that of the Bilum in Papua New Guinea, and we use it to consider how cultural artefacts (*Bilum*) are invested with meaning. Our task as anthropologists is to try to understand these meanings. Our task in this tutorial is to consider the principles learned in class (see notes below) and apply these to the analysis of material culture.

The Bilum

All objects and landscapes that human beings make are laden with symbolic meaning.
For us to understand this meaning (and the beliefs, values and categories associated to these objects) we apply visual analysis. Visual analysis means: situating objects in an ethnographic context.

- *Homologues*: conceptual associations between one form and another Horton and Finnegan argue that people make sense of the unknown by applying familiar models to it. Homologues are both universal and highly culturally specific.

Nice examples of a homologous association are the string bags *(Bilum)* of the Telefol in Papua New Guinea.

Women using looped string bags. They are ideal containers for transporting all manner of awkwardly shaped loads. Tari Market, Southern Highlands, 1978. (McKenzie 1991:6)

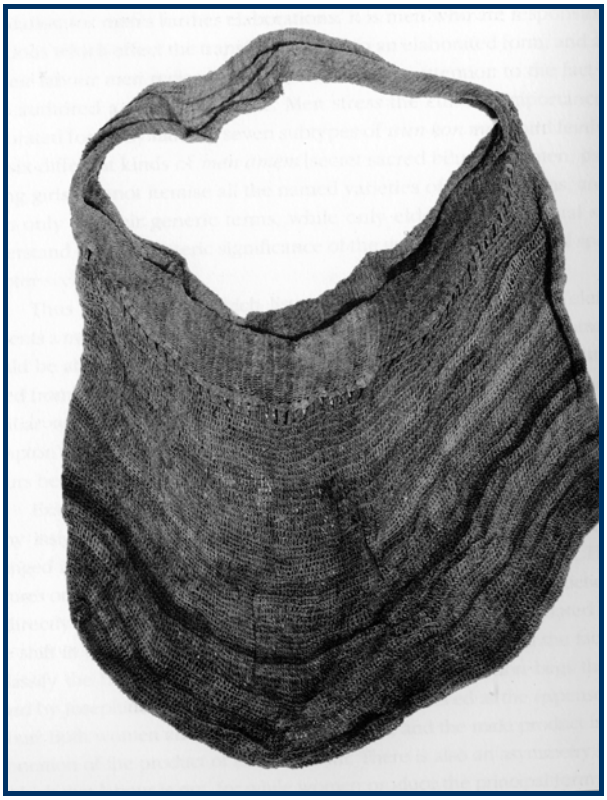
As anthropologists, when confronted with these objects we need to reflect upon their use, and the different things people do and say about them. Ask yourself: what is this object, what are its characteristics?

Characteristics of the Telefol people [see lecture]:

- Highlands New Guinea
- Endogamous marriages –rights to land are inherited bilaterally. All have land.
- Hunter and gatherers
- Small scale society – Fibre is collected by both men and women
- Among Telefol women spin and loop –they make Bilum
- Women are completely independent from men in organising Telefol. It is considered skill labour

What do people say about Bilum? (what are the native words?, the native expressions?, how is it used?)

- Use
- enjoy
- sharing
- giving
- communicating
- metaphor
- thinking
- It is valuable (our car)
- It is good (it feeds us)
- It protects us (looks after us, babies and things)
- Has aesthetic value (nice, makes us happy, enhances the appearance of the carrier)



If there wasn't such a thing as a Bilum, then, my word, there would be anything. The Bilum is the bones of our people. We only need to know how to make one thing. The Bilum, because it is such a good and useful thing.
Tona, women speaking
Telefomin 1984
(McKenzie 1991:127)

Picture: the principal form of Telefol Bilum, the aam bal men [mouthhand Bilum] a large open-looped flexible domestic container {McKenzie 1991:58}

What else do Telefol people say about the Bilum, what kind of connections do they make through the Bilum:

- –It must be technically well-made with evenly spun string and regular looks, and present a harmonious form
- It must be strong enough to carry heavy load
- It must conform to the significant canons of the Telefol style
- Marks out 'our' identity
- Symbolise the ideals of the Telefol. Each feature reflects the cultural value which the Telefol place on their social practices
- It is a traditional gift
- The Bilum epitomises woman's capacity to transform elements from the natural world into useful/aesthetic/necessary products. It is a 'gendered' object. It creates a visual analogy (swollen forms –pregnant women: garden produce : nestling child – Also. Cassowary/women.
- It moves between men and women's worlds. 'multiple authorship'
- Interrelation of loop structures and social
- structure

Make sure you read McKenzie's Book to understand the full ethnographic context that makes this analysis possible. *Exercise [at home]*

Analyse a photograph that has meaning for you. Start by making a summary of the ethnographic context surrounding the picture. Outline the different meanings it has for your or other people.

22 Tutorial 3
Wakakusa and the Go Game

This tutorial reflects upon the themes of wrapping and material culture. It touches on the themes of the self, the body and body transformation that we will examine in future lectures. More specifically, this tutorial will look at the interpretation of art and emotions in other cultures. In this tutorial we look at one ethnographic case, that of the Edo print in Medieval Japan, and we consider how to analyse art across cultures. Our task in this tutorial is to consider the principles learned in class and apply these to the interpretation of art from other cultures.

This handout looks at how images can be analysed using ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological theory. This case concentrates on the famous Ukiyo-e (Japanese drawing) popularised during the Edo (1615-1868) and Meiji (1968-1912) periods in Japan. This handout considers three issues:

1. First, it illustrates how anthropology can be used for the analysis of artistic forms (past and present) in different societies.
2. Second, the analysis examines how anthropological theories (here theories about wrapping in Japan) can be used to analyse gender, emotions, and even politics in a given society.
3. Thirdly, this case examines how easy is to misrepresent different societies through analysis of art forms and how anthropology can contribute to the understanding of representation of culture through art.

UKIYO-E
Ukiyo-e depicts characters in the performing arts, often actors and 'women of beauty' (geisha and courtesans). [return to your lecture notes]

Here we examine a famous Ukiyo-e entitled Wakakusa (the name of the courtesan), which illustrate many of the aesthetic and social concerns of these Japanese period. I also contend that by looking closely at ethnographic details such as wrapping and games, we can start understanding how emotions are represented and understood through Japanese art.

Courtesans, Prostitutes and Geisha: The Floating World and the 'Water Trade'
Women working on the 'water trade' and 'the floating world' included women of different ages who dedicated themselves to entertainment and performance. High ranked courtesans were expected o display erudition and skill in all tradition arts. These included, calligraphy, music, shamisen, painting, dance and flower arrangement.

Most analysis of the Japanese society concentrate on the elements that attract 'contemporary' taste: the division line between entertainment and prostitution, exotic trade, display of aesthetics, absence of emotions in social context, lavish decorations. While contemporary tastes look at the most exotic elements of the period, few others remain obscure.

GO is one of these elements that most observers often dismiss as a secondary (something that the courtesan is doing) as if it had no social or symbolic relevance [see your notes on how Ukiyo painters represented courtesans].

Origins of GO
- Go is known as the oldest game in China and Japan.
- Go is played by two opponents who use white and black stones over a chessboard like board.
- Go is often depicted among the artist of the floating world. Like the floating world itself Go does not depend on formal rules but intuition and skills.
- Wakakusa is holding the white stones, suggesting she was known as a strong go player (weak players start with black). She is also suggesting an introspective play, one where the player learns against herself, trying new moves, improving her strength.

In order to contextualise the game and in order to assess how the game is being used to symbolise erotic relations, her own strength and knowledge, it is necessary to

look into the other aspect that was quintessential to this period: the wrapping of the body and the display of the body through clothes.

The self and wrapping

Harunobu, the author, depicted women as having a doll-like quality (impassable, ornamented, an aesthetic object for male consumption).

Ukiyo-e drawings concentrate on the performance of the self. The self is presented in opulence, mostly through the way it is presented to the viewer, dress, kimono, with heavy ornamentation and heavy wrappings. These wrappings are very expressive: they 'talk'. In opposition to clothes, emotions are not expressed. Emotions cannot be read in the face, the faces are quite emotionless, express little, they present a social face, one where the individual keeps his or her emotions to herself.

Quite often Ukiyo-e is said to have a clear absence of direct emotion. Most authors, however, fail to acknowledge that Ukiyo-e artists liked to depict emotions in an indirect, covert, alluded way. While the face is presented as slightly 'emotionless', the emotions are conveyed through the presentation of the self. They are conveyed through the wrapping of the body (and also poems in the drawings). The result of using wrapping to express emotions is a paradox. By using wrapping to display emotions, the face shows greater, inner-self emotions. The face does not need to be painted with a lot of expression in order to express complex emotions. It is the contrast of a very expressive, non-verbal, material fabric what gives the quiet face expression. It directs the attention to where expressions are quietly but exuberantly expressed, in their clothes. In fact, the contrast between wrapping and face gives Wakakusa the power to express greater emotions that if the author had chosen to paint a very expressive face.

At a superficial level most descriptions of Ukiyo-e, see clothes as mere decorative, colourful garments. They have no other symbolism. This is highly surprising when the Edo and Meiji periods produced so much work about the social and symbolic importance of clothes. Many Ukiyo-e paintings, like these ones, depict a world of sumptuous garments, extravagant colour and dispositions, rich fabrics and designs. They display great contrast of intense emotions and played-down manifestation of such emotions. I will argue that this contrast is usually expressed through the ways the kimono is layered, made to float, open or revealing. [*Ukiyo e- three courtesans playing at go]*

Playing games, wrapping the body: "unwrapping gifts"

There is a strong contrast in Wakakusa's

dress. Wakakusa is dressed in a rich kimono, with a high-obi (belt) tied at the front. The top of the kimono is heavily tied. The bottom is in disarray. When we look at the top part, the inner-layers of the kimono are white and red, like that of a gift, before unwrapping. The top torso kimono colours suggests she is wrapped like a gift, or a gift. The obi is not at her waist but much higher, wide and clearly tide-up, as if she was wrapped with a knot. Furthermore, two layers structure the top obi, red and white. This combination represents auspiciousness in gifts. In contrast with the top, the lower part of her kimono is in disarray. Her right arm is obscured from view, her right sleeve slips down her side, pulling her outer kimono down (many characters of the floating world, hide one of their arms inside the clothes). She is wrapped in many layers, her body concealed behind the form of her clothes. A sensual move is suggested with her 'parting' legs (see poem below), as the kimono reveals one of its inner layers.

Poems and movements
The picture is accompanied by a short poem by herself, presumably in her own handwriting (Pinkard 1999). The haiku (seventeen-syllable poem) are full of double meanings and allusions to seduction and her trade. The poem says:

Again they break, the fancy sandals she wears -- cherry-blossom salt.

In Pinkard's analysis, each line tell us the identity of Wakakusa:

Again they break means she parts her thighs.
Fancy sandals signify a prostitute;
cherry-blossom alludes to a handsome lover;
salt suggests a house in the pleasure quarters. (see lecture for an alternative reading)

Conclusion: Representing emotions through wrapping in Japan
The issue of emotions, and how these are represented has always puzzled Western observers. In most accounts, Japanese are depicted as 'not showing emotions', cleverly negotiating the different sides of the self: a public self the self of politeness, and private self, the self of emotions and inner thinking.

Like many Ukiyo-e, she is depicted quite emotionless. But this is only a very superficial understanding of how emotions are represented in Japan through art. While the face is motionless and not so expressive of emotions, her wrapping is a rich emotional story. The wrapping, not her face, tell us about her inner emotions, and about her dreams. She dreams about her ability to control the game, which she also reflects in the poem, as she expects a handsome lover (a romantic ideal among courtesans), while she admits her own trade (sandals). The reference to gift giving and consumption are clearly eluded through the colour of the layering of clothes, and the use of salt in inauspicious contexts, thus she is protecting herself of any evil that may come her way.

Wakakusa expresses her emotions in disarray while keep under control. She has a firm game to the game, she is a polished player, she can seduce, control, win a game. Simultaneously she is torn between two layers of emotions. On the one hand those represented by her control, tided obi, wrapped kimono, the formal and social appearances that she needs to display, on the other hand, the floating world, the allusions to her job, and her attitude 'in waiting' for a handsome lover.

This ambiguity and both, concealing and revealing increases the erotic theme of the picture, but it also enhances the artistic display of emotions, it makes them surface to the clothes (as opposed to surfacing through the face), visible while not apparent. By using clothes to represent inner contradictions, we get a chance to 'see the inside' without having to 'unwrap' the inside. There is no need to unwrap her psychological state, there is no need to deconstruct her emotions. They are all clearly expressed somewhere else, in her clothes; the ones that that wrap the self. In this respect wrapping stands as a physical representation of the inner-self, as an externalisation of emotions.

Prints in handout:

Wakakusa at the Go Board by Harunobu Zuzuki 1779 From Yoshiwara Shunro Bijin Awase Sugata Kagami (beautiful women of the Yoshiwara quarters playing at the Go board)

Women playing Go. Oban by Chikanoby, published by Katsuki Yoshikatsu in 1920 From the series *Fujin Kurabe Reishiki no Zu* (Ladies' Politie Behaviour Compared in Picture)

Exercise 1: Using the analysis of wrapping and the symbolism of Go, can you appreciate how emotions are represented in this Ukiyo-e below?

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Exercise 2
How do we represent emotions? Can you give an example from your own cultural background?
Gather ideas from your classmates
Can you find any example of how emotions are represented in 'western' art?
Bring these ideas and examples together for a group discussion

23 Tutorial 4
Out of Africa

Exercise:

Read the handout first. The handout has visual transcript of the film. Watch the film with the questions in mind. Do not answer the questions during the film. Try answering as many questions as possible either in class or later at home

Entry titles

During the colonial period, in the 1920s, European interest in collecting African art stimulated a transnational trade between Africa and the West.
Today this multi-million dollar trade lies largely in the hands of Muslin merchants.
This is a story about Gabai Baame, a merchant who brings "wood" from West Africa to sell in the United States.
This is a story about the meaning of art.

We call this “passport!”

What is a Passport?
The Passport is used as an object and as a paradox for African Art.
Explain the paradox

Try answering these questions after the film (not during the film)
Use the case of passport to discuss about authenticity, tourist art, African wood, and how these objects can help us discuss the past and the interpretation of art and history.

“when the market collapsed I turned to wood”

Definition of wood
Wood n. [French: bois}
1. A natural material used in the production of furniture, tools, and religious icons.
2. A commodity made of wood.
3. A work of "Art"

But since we are not fetishists, for we are wood vendors

How does religious beliefs affect the meaning of wood?
What is the *Baule* Worship and why does the vendor call it a fetish?
If in Muslim belief, Muslims should not have icons, display human icons (the human figure was made only by Allah, and it is a taboo to see human figures or anthropomorphic icons. How do Muslim sellers deal with this conflict?

Serious Art at a Gallery

What is serious art? What kind of wood is not serious? Is serious art more authentic than funny art?

Darkening of wood

Why is ‘old’ important?
How are things made ‘old’?
What comes out of a Mask?
Can you summarise the power of a mask?
Explain how wood is blackened and why

Stuff these ‘colons’ in to fill up the crate

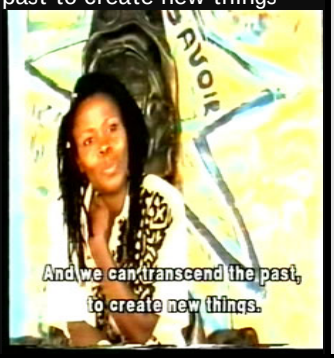
What is a ‘colon’?
What is wood, from the collectors point of view?
What is wood from the point of view of the maker?
Summarise the different points of view about wood
(maker/seller/artist/gallery owner and any other seen in the film)

Airport Art

Explain the process of importing wood
In the film we hear..”Import art, indigenous art, authentic art….are these just constructions?” Discuss

Take it all for $1800

How is the value of prices agreed?
What kinds of categories are used in assessing the commercial value of wood?
Why does African wood sell well in the United States?

And we can transcend the past to create new things  	Examine the views of this African Artist What kind of art can transcend the past? And why? Why, in her view, African art deserve the price it gets in the international market?
Gallery Art 	What is an art gallery? How is value given to objects? What is the opinion of the several gallery owners we see in the video?
"Just out of their heads..they knew nothing" 	Which criticism does the protagonist make about westerner's passion for African art? Did you like this film? What kind of questions did it suggest to you? Did you help you to think about the themes it proposes? Are these themes well developed? What else would you have added? What makes this a good ethnographic film? *Out of Africa* *by Gabai Baare* *Lisa Barbask* *Christopher Steiner* *Lucien Taylor* *Center for visual anthropology University of Southern California* *1992*

Map of the Ivory Coast

IVORY COAST FACTS

Population: 16.6 million (UN, 2003)
Capital: Yamoussoukro **Major languages:** French, indigenous languages
Major religions: Islam, Christianity, and indigenous beliefs
Life expectancy: 41 years (men), 41 years (women) (UN)
Monetary unit: 1 CFA (Communaute Financiere Africaine) franc = 100 centimes
Main exports: Cocoa, coffee, tropical woods, petroleum, cotton, bananas, pineapples, palm oil, fish
Average annual income: US $630 (World Bank, 2001)
Internet domain: .ci **International dialling code:** +225

24 Tutorial 5
Photo Wallahs

Exercise:
Read the handout first. The handout has visual transcript of the film. Watch the film with the questions in mind. Do not answer the questions during the film. Try answering as many questions as possible either in class or later at home

PHOTO WALLAHS	Entry titles An encounter with photography in Mussoorie, a North Indian hill station By David and Judith McDougall 1991 Oxmard Film Production What are the three most distinctive shots of the entrance of the film?
	What is the role of the traditional camera in capturing reality? Describe the studio of the artist. How is it filmed? Does the film give priority to photography. Is the narrative of film, photographic or does it have its own filmic narrative?
Photographic memory 	How are photographs used in this instance? How does it relate to the previous explanations? How do photographs relate to one's identity and history? Why is the past 'retouched'?
	Discuss the relation between 'capturing reality' (with a camera) and 'retouching reality' with the colour pencils Is it a photograph or a portrait? Can this distinction be made at this point in the film? What does the artist say about making portraits?

Good. Look at the camera 	What does 'posing' for the camera mean? Does 'posing' detract from capturing 'reality'? What is the 'reality' captured here?
Otherwise you don't get the right feelings 	Why do people dress up for taking pictures? What kind of picture do they take back home? How do people represent (like to represent) themselves? In which way What does the artist mean by "otherwise you don't get the right feelings". How do feelings are expressed through clothing and the camera?
Stuff these 'colons' in to fill up the crate 	In which way is the camera a form of mediumship In which way does dress define the identity of the self? Is taking pictures in this context only part of a 'tourist-trade'? or does it relate to other aspects of people's culture?
	Express how you feel about this picture
Bunti's age is 14 years. Height 5'2" fair complexion 	Outline the different uses of photography/photographs we see in the film If this picture had been retouched, would it matter? Examine the difference between photography for 'capturing the past', 'reflecting the self' (we saw earlier) and this one, photography for 'finding' lost children

I used to make my living from my own art

Outline the basic arguments of the discussion between the two artists. What is art (in this context)?

And we can see each other through photography

In which ways photography reflects cultural change?

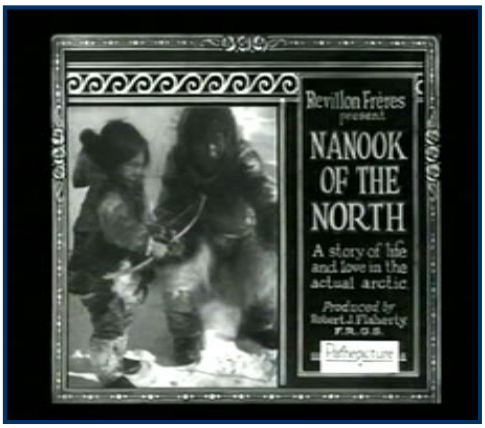
Stand here if you want to be seen on television

Here we see the importance of photography for advertising a new medium, the television.
Why do sometimes people 'freeze' in front of a television camera?
Are television and photography used very differently in this cultural context?
Explain what the film suggests to you. How is art discussed in this film? How does photography help us in understanding Indian ideas about the self, identity, the past, and society in general?
Is there anything you would have added to this film?
Is this film successful in explaining the role of photography in North India?
Does the film help us through thinking about photography and its relation to art and to culture?

INDIA FACTS Population: 1 billion (UN, 2003) **Capital:** New Delhi **Major languages:** Hindi, English and 17 other official languages **Major religions:** Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism **Life expectancy:** 63 years (men), 65 years (women) (UN) **Monetary unit:** 1 Indian Rupee = 100 paise **Main exports:** Agricultural products, textile goods, gems and jewelry, software services and technology, engineering goods, chemicals, leather products **Average annual income:** US $460 (World Bank, 2001) **Internet domain:** .in **International dialling code:** +91

25 Tutorial 6
Nanook of the North

Nanook of the North. A story of life and love in the Actual Arctic. A film by Robert Flaherty



USA 1922. 87 mi. B&W and tinted . silent with music

A classic of his genre, this book pioneered ethnographic film making. This film is the key work in the field of documentary film, and one of the most important productions in the history of cinema. Nanook of the North was hailed as a masterpiece on its release in 1922, and became both a critical and commercial success. Nonetheless, the film has its detractors, and controversies have raged concerning its staged and non-fictional status, Flaherty's methods, and its sensivity towards the indigenous culture that claims to portray.

What remains undeniable is the film's importance, its widereaching influence on other pioneering filmmakers such as Jean Rouch, and for the whole genre of documentary making. The film is powerful in story-telling, and it succeeds in capturing many aspects of Inuit life, specially their struggle against the forces of nature and their relation to the environment.

In assessing Nanook of the North, and he criticisms that has generated, it is important to remember that the film was not intended as a documentary – in fact, the genre had not yet been defined when Flaherty took his cameras to the Arctic. Flaherty meant to tell a story, and he never claimed otherwise. Nanook was made with an eye to commercial distribution and exhibitions, and it was made for audiences that were accustomed to narrative fiction films. Flaherty was not an ethnographer either. Anthropologists like Malinowski, far in the Trobriand Islands were just exploring the methods and ideas behind ethnographic filmmaking and ethnographic fieldwork in 1922. Flaherty, pioneered a style that was subsequently used by anthropologists of the period: building a story out of the materials of real life, showing the film to their informants, and using film to represent social life, as know after a long period of intensive familiarisation with the people and culture.

At the time of making Nanook, there were two forms of film production: the travelogue (taking the viewer to far away places, providing superficial and picturesque glimpses of social life) and portraits of industrial process (revealing how workers lived, their skills, and the condition of labour). These two styles were widely used and had a strong commercial appeal for cinema goers of the 1920s. Flaherty went beyond these styles and he combined them into an innovative new form, combining the exotic journey with the detailed examination of indigenous life, work and play.

By doing this, he not only created a new cinematographic style; he also gave birth to ethnographic filmic representations.
He turned the picturesque into a respectful portrait of native life.

As Duncan argues: "this portrait contained two things that remain, even today, at the very core of the documentary idea. These concepts are process and duration, in other words, the detailed representation of how

every day things are done (burning moss for fuel, covering a kayak, hunting, childcare, etc), and how long the doing takes. In Nanook, this combination leads to moments of matchless cinematic beauty, such as the igloo sequence, where labour is not only revealed in its social context, but emerges – through Nanook's skill and Flaherty's cinematic revelation – as an ideal of beauty and spirituality. First there is shelter, then warmth, and finally light; by giving real processes a human dimension, craftsmanship and artistry become one". This fusion is precisely one of the goals of ethnographic film making, in representing social life in its complexity, where art, symbolism, pragmatism, are part of a public display of native culture.
Nanook of the North gave birth to a completely new genre, pioneering new ideas about filming people and advancing the methods for executing great film-making. The film may feel long to newer audiences as film production has changed its styles and produced new genres. However, the length, tempo and structure of the film achieve something that many modern documentaries find still difficult to achieve: to transcend fiction and empower social reality. Its achievements include a strong sensitivity to indigenous ideas of time and the environment; to reflect small episodes of social contact with other groups, to bring out humour as well as drama and beauty.

Robert Flaherty 1884-1951

Robert Flaherty, generally regarded as the founder of the documentary, was the son of an iron-miner turned gold-prospector, and spent much of his childhood in remote prospecting camps. From his wanderings and encounters with Native Americans he developed a passion for exploration. Between 1910 and 1916 he carried out a series of expeditions in northern Canada on behalf of the industrialists Sir William Mackenzie, and during these journeys he was introduced to the then called, Eskimo culture (nowadays, the indigenous word Inuit or Inupiat is used instead). In 1913 he took along a motion picture camera for the fist time but whilst editing the footage in Toronto he accidentally dropped a cigarette on the negative, which was destroyed. He salvaged the work print, however, and used this to try to dump up support for another film and expedition. He failed; as he put it: 'it was a bad film; it was dull – it was little more than a travelogue. I had learned to explore, I had not learned to reveal. It was utterly inept, simply a scene of this and that, no relation, no thread of a story or continuity whatever'. In 1920 he obtained substantial sponsorship from the fur traders Revillon Freres specifically to make a film About the Eskimos. The result was the now-legendary Nanook of the North (1922), which was in fact rejected by distributors Paramount and First National before being taken up by Pathe and garnering considerable international success.

Produced Jesse L Lasky, with an eye to the commercial potential of this new style, commissioned Flaherty to go to the South Seas to make 'another Nanook'. However, the peaceful life of the Polynesians hardly leant itself to a story about the struggle for survival against the elements, and Flaherty returned with a tropical idyll which was a commercial failure, Monana (1925). Despite this, Mona is the first film to which John Grierson applied the term 'documentary'. By now considered an expert on the exotic, Flaherty collaborated with the great FW Murnau on Tabu (1928), but fell out with his collaborators and left the projects before completion. This followed Shadows of the South Sea (1927). He participated in Industrial Britain in 1933.

In Man of Aran (1933) Flaherty finally found another subject which lent itself to the elemental theme of Nanook, although it was criticised by some at the time for romanticising the lives of the Aran islanders. By contrast, The Land (1942), a film about the destruction of natural resources made for the Standard Oil Company, is a masterpiece to rank with Nanook; on the surface a simple story about the discovery of oil in a small Louisiana bayou, it is in fact a profound meditation on the vision of childhood, the spirit of place, and the need for reconciliation between the forces of nature and the energies of the industrial world. *Text Cover connoisseur Video 2000.*

Observations
Watch the film, and consider how Inupiat life is described. Try to make a statement about the different sequences that define Flaherty's innovative filmic style. Outline the structure of the sequences. What was your impression of the film? What did you learn about Inupiat people?

26 Tutorial 7
Guardian of the Forest

Exercise:
Read the handout first. The handout is a visual transcript of the film. Watch the film with the questions in mind. Do not answer the questions during the film. Try answering as many questions as possible either in class or later at home. WARNING: explicit animal killing

The Guardian of the Forest. West Africa
Anne-Laure Folly Reinman – Producer and director
Amanou/Mamba Production May 1991

This video illustrates some of the beliefs and rituals mentioned in another film of this course: Out of Africa. You can complement this video with any text dealing with witchcraft, and its relation to non-accidental death; and the effect of Christianity in Africa

I am a fetish priest

Sikavi is a fetish priest.
Describe his role in West African society (from his point of view)
Does this film give us details of how people live? Are there any explanations?

What do you think about 'the narrator's voice'? What kind of impression does it create? Are cultural events explained? Are there any anthropological explanations?
How did he learn to be a priest?

Mami Wata sea goddess

Describe the difference between Gods and Knowledge
How and when is fetishism practiced?
Why is it practiced?

What kind of journey does a fetish priest make?
Why do rituals can only take place every three years?
What has changed?

There's a force here in Africa

Where do these forces come from?
Explain the cosmology of the death and their relation with the living
How do Christianity and Fetishism coexist?
How do people talk about the relation between the two set of beliefs?
Why does the 'speaker [voice in off]' see a contradiction between holding two belief systems (Christianity and the forces)? Is this contradiction a sign of an ethnocentric, biased view?
What is the informant's view on this 'contradiction'?
How does 'the force' link past and present beliefs in Africa?

Koffidajabakou

What is Koffidajabakou?

What is a fetish?

Why are fetish represented in objects?

Is there something significant on this fetish that appears later on the film?

A sacred place is where men are buried

Why does an accident need to be dealt with a ritual?

If a sacred place is where men are buried, at the village center why does the ritual take elsewhere?
What other burial do we see later in the film?
Later in the film we will see another burial. Is there a connection between the two?

Do people die?
What do the dead do for the living?

It is normal people should sacrifice a ram before I start the ceremonies

Why do people treat fetish priests as kings?

Can you relate Sikavi's argument to E-Evans Pritchard's descriptions of the *leopard chief* and the *chicken oracle*?

How does sacrifice relate to the giving of prestations? In order to answer this, outline the different prestations given to the fetish, then consider how food is given and distributed to people, living and dead

What is a sacrifice?

Why is blood important?

What is it done to the animal after its death?

What is blood used for?

What does the Ox represent?

Like Jesus did to save the entire world

Explain the similarities between animal sacrifice and Jesus Christ sacrifice according to Sikavi

What is religious syncretism? [if you don't know about syncretism, now is a good time to revise any of your core texts for anthropology of religion]
Why is animal sacrifice necessary for West African society?
Why is sacrifice necessary in Christian beliefs?
Is 'eating the body of Christ' in Christian rituals different from 'eating sacrificed animals' in Fetishism rituals?

Madness can be healed here

Outline the principles of madness, how it is created, how it is healed

Outline the differences between 'European' and 'west African' ideas about madness

What else can be treated by Sikavi and the forces?

What is a possession?

Is there any distinctive gender divide when it comes to possession?

Why?

Mimi: Before It starts, I feel cold, then I start shaking 	What is a trance? How is a trance induced? Do you know other types of trance? What does happen during a trance? Are music, singing, and dance relevant to the rituals? What is women's role in playing music, singing or dancing? In which way are people who get into trance different from priests in the powers they have?
	A sorcerer is born A fetish priest is initiated Explain this categories What does a priest do to learn his job? Would Sikavi's sons like to be fetish priests? What is the meaning of red and white?
 	The sign on the fetish altar reads: The best religion is the truth Discuss End caption Sikavi say: With the forces I can say I can do EVERYTHING This theme is repeated several times during the film, why? What do you think? Did you like the film? Was it well filmed? Are there any problems with the film, with the kind of information it gives, with the voices or representation of gender? What did you learned? Did it exoticise African fetish beliefs?

27 Tutorial 8
The Dreaming

The Dreaming and Australian Native Art

We will watch an ethnographic film called: the Dreaming. Complement your viewing with the following tutorial exercise

1- Read the story (It is an original story from the dreaming, told by an Australian aborigine (Aunt Beryl Carmichael)
2- Look at the different pictures of Aboriginal Art.
3- Prepare a short discussion about the symbols in the pictures
4- Watch film – Discuss how the film changes your perception of the meaning of the Dreaming

Creation Story *told by Aunt Beryl Carmichael*

"This is the creation story of Ngiyaampaa country, as well as the land belonging to Eaglehawk and Crow.
Now long, long time ago of course, in the beginning, when there was no people, no trees, no plants whatever on this land, "Guthi-guthi", the spirit of our ancestral being, he lived up in the sky.
So he came down and he wanted to create the special land for people and animals and birds to live in.
So Guthi-guthi came down and he went on creating the land for the people-after he'd set the borders in place and the sacred sights, the birthing places of all the Dreamings, where all our Dreamings were to come out of.
Guthi-guthi put one foot on Gunderbooka Mountain and another one at Mount Grenfell.
And he looked out over the land and he could see that the land was bare. There was no water in sight, there was nothing growing. So Guthi-guthi knew that trapped in a mountain-Mount Minara-the water serpent, Weowie, he was trapped in the mountain. So Guthi-guthi called out to him, "Weowie, Weowie", but because Weowie was trapped right in the middle of the mountain, he couldn't hear him.
Guthi-guthi went back up into the sky and he called out once more, "Weowie", but once again Weowie didn't respond. So Guthi-guthi came down with a roar like thunder and banged on the mountain and the mountain split open. Weowie the water serpent came out. And where the water serpent travelled he made waterholes and streams and depressions in the land.
So once all that was finished, of course, Weowie went back into the mountain to live and that's where Weowie lives now, in Mount Minara. But then after that, they wanted another lot of water to come down from the north, throughout our country. Old Pundu, the Cod, it was his duty to drag and create the river known as the Darling River today.
So Cod came out with Mudlark, his little mate, and they set off from the north and they created the big river. Flows right down, water flows right throughout our country, right into the sea now.
And of course, this country was also created, the first two tribes put in our country were Eaglehawk and Crow. And from these two tribes came many tribal people, many tribes, and we call them sub-groups today. So my people, the Ngiyaampaa people and the Barkandji further down are all sub-groups of Eaglehawk and Crow.
So what I'm telling you-the stories that were handed down to me all come from within this country".

http://aboriginalart.com.au/gallery/gallery_intro.htm
http://www.dreamtime.net.au/creation/index.cfm

Glossary: Aunty Beryl Carmichael

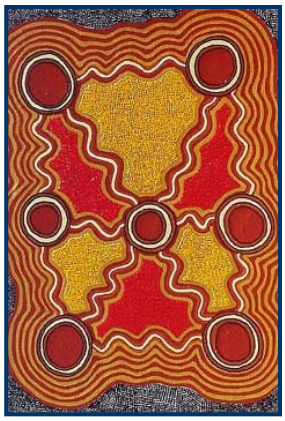
Word:	Meaning:
Ngiyaampaa	One Aboriginal group of central/western New South Wales
Barkandji	Aboriginal people of Menindee area, western New South Wales
Guthi-guthi	Creator spirit of Ngiyaampaa
Gunderbooka	Mountain in Ngiyaampaa country
Weowie	Water spirit
Pundu	Cod
Koockard	River goanna
Woomera	Notched stick for spear throwing
Gunyah	Hut made of boughs and bark
Boondie	Hitting stick
Mallee	Scrubland

THE MEANING OF THE DREAMTIME
TRANSLATION OF DREAMING

Dreaming is an approximate English translation of an Aboriginal concept, which has no equivalent in the English language. Groups each have their own words for this concept: for example the Pitjantjatjara people use the term Tjukurpa, the Arrernte refer to it as Aldjerinya and the Adnyamathanha use the word Nguthuna.

THE DREAMING

Dreaming does not convey the fullness of the concept for Aboriginal people but is the most acceptable English word to Aboriginal people. The word is acceptable because very often revelations or insights are received in dreams or recurring visions. The Dreaming refers to all that is known and all that is understood. It is the way Aboriginal people explain life and how their world came into being. It is central to the existence of traditional Aboriginal people, their lifestyle and their culture, for it determines their values and beliefs and their relationship with every living creature and every feature of the landscape.



JOURNEY OF THE CREATOR ANCESTORS

The Dreaming tells of the journeys and deeds of creator ancestors. The creator ancestors made the trees, rocks, waterholes, rivers, mountains and stars, as well as the animals and plants, and their spirits inhabit these features of the natural world today. Good and bad behaviours are demonstrated in Dreaming stories as ancestors hunt, marry, care for children and defend themselves from their enemies. The Dreaming and most of its landscapes are represented in Art Rock and Land maps like these here.
Make sure you watch the film*: Dreamings* to see a contextualised example of map-making, paying attention to the meaning of its dots and lines.

28 Revision and Exam tips

Exam techniques

0- Prepare for the exam. Chose three or four themes that you feel you can develop (the ones you may have more affinity for). Make sure you have read at least five or six sources for each theme that you plan to develop. This will make you feel confident that you have done some work in the right direction. Writing exams is about self-confidence. It is also about putting hours of work in a balanced and organised way. You can gain self-confidence by knowing that you have prepared well for the exam. You can balance your work by allocating time and effort in a manner that is consistent with your study habits.

1- Try reading the whole paper through from start to finish briefly. Don't attempt to start immediately. Try to have a feel for the questions and the timing that you can give to each question

2- Pay close attention to each question, you might like to highlight the pertinent words if this helps- if it says 'why' then try to answer why, not what. Everyone misreads questions at some time and it can be the most disheartening of processes

3- Make sure that you work out the time for each question – if there are three questions and it is a three hour exam then try to spend about 55 minutes on each question, this will give you a cushion if you run over, or allow you to come back and read through your answers at the end. You don't want to spend 1h30m on the first question, unless you are sure that you can provide very little information at all for one of the other questions.

4- The quality of an answer is more important than the quantity (the amount of pages) you write. Avoid baffling and repeating things you have already said; re-read your answer to make sure you have not repeated your ideas too often, and specially check that you have not repeated the question once and over again.

5- Try and do your best question first – the one that you feel that you know most about and can answer the best. This way the examiner will know that you are a good pupil and it will help to relax you and make you more confident when it comes to answering the other questions where you feel that your knowledge is just a that little bit shakier. Try to improve what seems shakier by using adequate language; avoid too personal or too distant answers. Do not apologise for what you do or do not know

6- Make sure that your writing is legible. It is amazing how under the pressure to write a lot in an exam, student's handwriting deteriorates and becomes unreadable – and the poor examiner is not a miracle reader…. Illegible writing also gives the impression that the student is trying to conceal lack of knowledge

7- Information is not the same as knowledge. Description is not the same as analysis. Make sure you do not pile down loads of information only. If you describe a book or a theme, try to introduce some analysis making sure that you are answering the question. Avoid making your own questions as you go…being critical does not mean making questions, it means being able to answer them. If you create too many questions and attempt to answer them

you will inevitably answer something different from what was set up in the original exam question. Stay focussed, re-read the question few times along your text, to make sure that you are on track. Being critical does not mean being biased. Avoid strong statements about this or that author. Try to give a balanced overview of the questions and try to see the connections between the question and the literature of the course. Do not give answers that you have used previously for an essay. Try introducing some novelty by looking at a new angle or by improving the answer you gave in a previous essay. Remember that an essay and an exam are two different things. You do not have to remember (digest and regurgitate) everything about a theme. Instead, you need to show an understanding of the theme, an understanding of the different things you can say about that theme.

SO…STAY CALM, READ THE QUESTION and ANSWER THE QUESTION.

Make good use of time and preparation so you gain confidence before the exam. Avoid commenting too much with others before and after the exam as it will make you feel nervous. Bring a drink or a sweet with you. Do not take many valuables with you. In most exam halls you will have to leave your belongings at the entrance of the hall. Do not carry books or notes with you to the table. It is very common for exam invigilators to find that students carry their textbooks and notes with them to the table unadvertedly. Do not get too nervous if you do, just tell the invigilators to take them back to the entrance or assigned area of the room. Do not hesitate to ask for permission for going to toilets or if you need a drink. If you have special needs, make sure you have been given the right papers and allocation of extra time. If you need to use a dictionary or calculator, ask first if these are allowed for that particular exam. If you classmate next to you is writing like a train-machine, don't feel disheartened…quantity and speed of writing does not mean quality of answers. Think, what is the course about? How can this question be best answered for this course? And….*Good Luck!*

THEMES IN VISUAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Visual Anthropology is concerned how different cultures are depicted in a range of media, in particular ethnographic film and photography. The exam will address these topics. Exam questions will be made about how anthropologists deal with analytical and ethical issues to do with visual representations of other cultures. It is very important that you know at least four ethnographic cases and show that you have paid attention to how these cultures are represented by anthropologists. The content of these questions seeks for you to consider how the analysis of art and material culture helps us to gain insight into cultural values worldwide. The exam questions should also contain references to the way different cultural groups represent themselves through art, material culture, and performance. These references should be based on ethnographic material from class and especially from your readings.

The Development of Themes for an Exam

Your course started with a general description of what is 'visual' and a definition of 'visual systems'. We emphasised the importance of sound ethnographic knowledge, the cultural and social context, which gives meaning to visual systems. In the first lectures we looked at how anthropology had a set of practices and methods, which we use to collect, examine and analyse visual forms. We explored different types of visual systems, (Japanese wrapping, Australian dreaming, and issues such as maps, photography, ethnographic film, performative ideas about the body, the relation between visual systems and the self). The following lectures underpinned the idea that each visual system is culturally constructed and we looked at different examples of this. Each culture defines its own visual systems and these systems must be understood from 'within'. Following Geertz's ideas of 'thick' description, we established that some descriptions of visual systems managed to convey 'thickness' better than others. Once we have an understanding of a given visual system, we need to consider how these systems link to wider economic, gender, and religious processes.

The objective of most lectures and readings was to reach an understanding of social categories and social meanings of 'seeing', the many levels of 'seeing'. What do people 'see'? How do they see? (the world, their own society and so on) What are the categories and classifications of 'seeing'? What is the social meaning of 'seeing' for each particular group? For example, in the Australian cases, most classifications about seeing, painting, performing, was found in maps and tales about the dreaming. The analysis of these maps and tales told us that the classifications used by Aboriginal people told us that when they 'saw' a dotted map, or heard a tale, these representations were about identity and unity with the land and its animals. However, many forms of Aboriginal art also had to do with the changes and transformations of such identity. Other cases, like the Japanese wrapping, suggested that Japanese used symbolic category of seeing (auspicious) which in turn, defined relations between households and people.

In the exam I will be looking for evidence that:

0- you have ethnographic knowledge about visual systems
1- you can describe a visual system against ethnographic descriptions
2- you understand ideas about art, performance, aesthetic, material culture, photography, film, and why these are used by anthropologists
3- you can trace the historical development of visual anthropology and answer why visual anthropology is important for anthropology as a whole. What kind of knowledge does visual anthropology generate? Is it useful for anthropology? Why?
4- you can trace the conceptual development (the ideas that make visual anthropology) of visual anthropology
5- to question issues of ethics, ownership, cultural representation. How are people represented (in media, in films, in art, in museums…) Why? What methods of representation are used? Are there any problems in these methods, and these representations?